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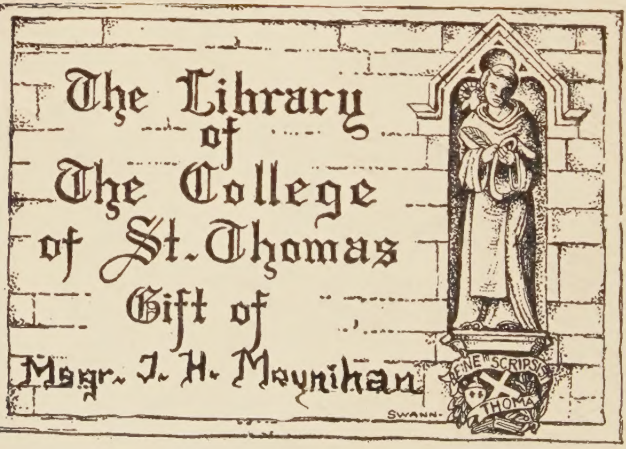

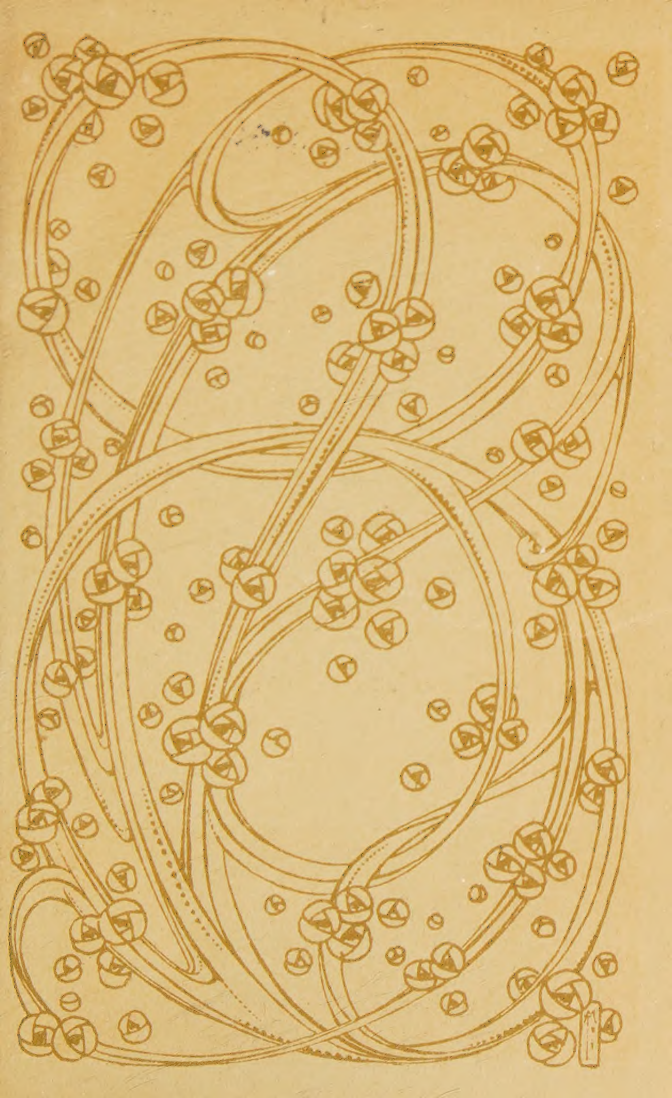

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POEMS BY

LORD BYRON

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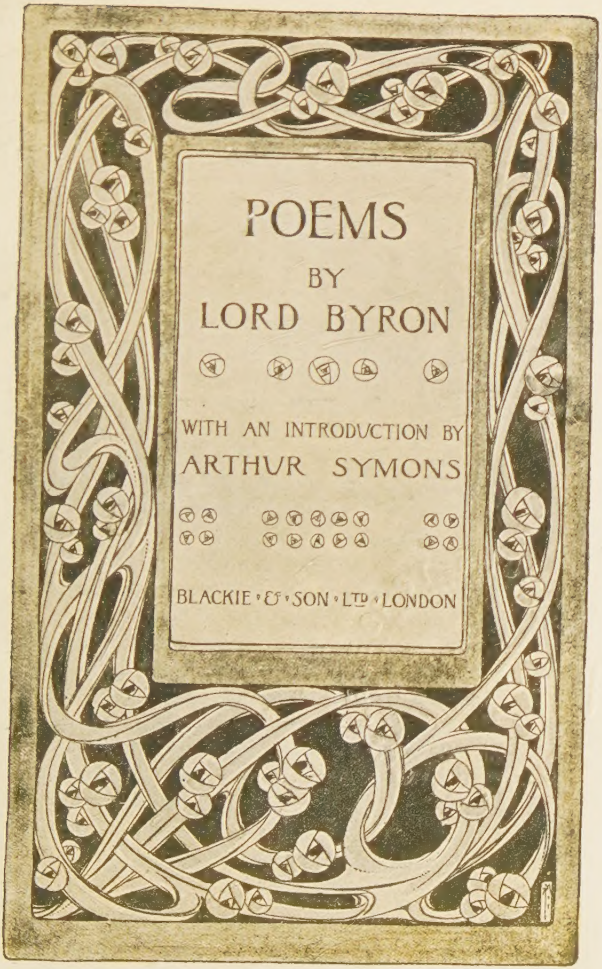
POEMS
BY
LORD BYRON
WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
ARTHUR SYMONS
BLACKIE & SON LTD LONDON

PR
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P54

Byron is to be judged by the whole mountainous mass of his work, and not by any fragment of coloured or glittering spar which one's pick may have extricated from the precipitous hill-side. His work is a kind of natural formation, high enough to climb, and wide enough to walk on. There is hard climbing and heavy walking, but, once there, the air braces and the view is wide.

In making a selection from this large and uneven mass of poetry, it is difficult to do justice to a writer who was almost never a really good writer of verse, except in a form of what he rightly defined as "nondescript and ever-varying rhyme". The serio-comic ottava rima of "Don Juan" and "The Vision of Judgment" is the only metre which Byron ever completely mastered; and it is only in those unique poems, in which Goethe detected, for the first time in modern poetry, a "classically elegant comic style", that Byron is wholly able to express the new quality which he brought into English literature in a wholly personal, or at all satisfying, way. From the first he was a new

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force, but a force unconscious of direction, with all the uncouthness of nature in convulsions. He had a strong, direct, and passionate personality, but we find him, even in the better parts of "Childe Harold", putting rhetoric in the place of that simplicity which he was afterwards to discover by accident, and in jest; we find him, throughout almost the whole of the poetical romances, a mere masquerader in Eastern frippery, which is scarcely the better because it happened to have been bought on the spot; we find him, in his serious reflections, either quite sensible and quite obvious, or, as in addresses to the ocean, and the like, straining on tiptoe towards heights that can only be reached by wings. His lyric verse was always without magic, and only now and then, and chiefly in the lines beginning "When we two parted", was he able to turn speech into a kind of emphatic and intense chant, into which poetry comes as a kind of momentary suspension of the emphasis. His rendering of actual sensation, as in parts of "Mazeppa", is the nearest approach to poetry which he made in those poems which were supposed to be the very voice of passion. Everything that he wrote in blank verse, and consequently the whole of the plays, is vitiated by his incapacity to handle that

metre, or indeed to distinguish it, in any vital or audible way, from prose. Now and again personal feeling flung off the ill-fitting and constraining clothes of rhetoric, and stood up naked; sentiments of resentment, against his wife, or against the world, or against himself, made poetry sometimes. Then, as it was to be under other conditions in the later work, his flame is the burning of much dross: excellent food for flame.

And yet, out of all this writing which is hardly literature, this poetry which is hardly verse, there comes, even to the reader of to-day, for whom "the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme" is as dead and buried as Napoleon, some inexplicable thrill, appeal, potency; Byron still lives, and we shall never cease to read almost his worst work, because some warmth of his life comes through it. Almost everything that he wrote was written for relief, and its effect upon us is due to something never actually said in it; it is a kind of wild dramatic speech of some person in a play, whose words become weighty, tragic, and pathetic because of the fierce light thrown upon them by a significant character and by transfiguring circumstance.

When Byron wrote to Murray, "You might as well want a midnight all stars as

rhyme all perfect", he was theorizing over his own failure to achieve sustained excellence on any one level. Luckily he carried the theory, in his own downright way, into practice, and, in the "versified Aurora Borealis" of the great comic poems, the defect turns into a quality, and creates what is really a new poetical form. Byron is a heroical buffoon, the great jester of English poetry; and he is this because he is the only English poet who is wholly buoyant, arrogant, and irresponsible. "I never know the word which will come next", he boasts, in "Don Juan", and, for once, improvisation becomes a means to an end, almost an end in itself. It is in the comic verse, strangely enough, that the first real mastery over form shows itself: a genius for rhyme which becomes a new music and decoration, as of cap and bells on the head of sober marching verse, and a genius for plain statement which leaves prose behind in mere fighting force, and glorifies fighting force with a divine natural illumination.

ARTHUR SYMONS.

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The Vision of Judgment

I

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:
His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull,
So little trouble had been given of late;
Not that the place by any means was full,
But since the Gallic era "eighty-eight"
The devils had ta'en a longer, stronger pull,
And "a pull all together", as they say
At sea—which drew most souls another way.

II

The angels all were singing out of tune,
And hoarse with having little else to do,
Excepting to wind up the sun and moon,
Or curb a runaway young star or two,
Or wild colt of a comet, which too soon
Broke out of bounds o'er the eternal blue,

Splitting some planet with its playful tail,
As boats are sometimes by a wanton whale.

III

The guardian seraphs had retired on high,
Finding their charges past all care below;
Terrestrial business fill'd nought in the sky
Save the recording angel's black bureau;
Who found, indeed, the facts to multiply
With such rapidity of vice and woe,
That he had stripp'd off both his wings in quills,
And yet was in arrear of human ills.

IV

His business so augmented of late years,
That he was forced, against his will no doubt
(Just like those cherubs, earthly ministers),
For some resource to turn himself about,
And claim the help of his celestial peers,
To aid him ere he should be quite worn out,
By the increased demand for his remarks:
Six angels and twelve saints were named his clerks.

v

This was a handsome board—at least for heaven;
And yet they had even then enough to do,
So many conquerors' cars were daily driven,
So many kingdoms fitted up anew;
Each day too slew its thousands six or seven,
Till at the crowning carnage, Waterloo,
They threw their pens down in divine disgust—
The page was so besmear'd with blood and dust.

VI

This by the way; 'tis not mine to record
What angels shrink from: even the very devil
On this occasion his own work abhorr'd,
So surfeited with the infernal revel:
Though he himself had sharpen'd every sword,
It almost quench'd his innate thirst of evil.
(Here Satan's sole good work deserves insertion—
'Tis, that he has both generals in reversion.)

VII

Let 's skip a few short years of hollow peace,
Which peopled earth no better, hell as wont,
And heaven none—they form the tyrant's lease,
With nothing but new names subscribed upon 't:
'T will one day finish: meantime they increase,
"With seven heads and ten horns", and all in front,
Like Saint John's foretold beast; but ours are born
Less formidable in the head than horn.

VIII

In the first year of freedom's second dawn
Died George the Third; although no tyrant, one
Who shielded tyrants, till each sense withdrawn
Left him nor mental nor external sun:
A better farmer ne'er brush'd dew from lawn,
A worse king never left a realm undone!

He died—but left his subjects still behind,
One half as mad—and t' other no less blind.

IX

He died!—his death made no great stir on earth;
His burial made some pomp; there was profusion
Of velvet, gilding, brass, and no great dearth
Of aught but tears—save those shed by collusion.
For these things may be bought at their true worth;
Of elegy there was the due infusion—
Bought also; and the torches, cloaks, and banners,
Heralds, and relics of old Gothic manners,

X

Form'd a sepulchral melodrame. Of all
The fools who flock'd to swell or see the show,
Who cared about the corpse? The funeral
Made the attraction, and the black the woe.
There throbb'd not there a thought which pierced the pall;
And when the gorgeous coffin was laid low,

It seem'd the mockery of hell to fold
The rottenness of eighty years in gold.

XI

So mix his body with the dust! It might
Return to what it *must* far sooner, were
The natural compound left alone to fight
Its way back into earth, and fire, and air;
But the unnatural balsams merely blight
What nature made him at his birth, as bare
As the mere million's base unmummied clay—
Yet all his spices but prolong decay.

XII

He's dead—and upper earth with him has done;
He's buried; save the undertaker's bill,
Or lapidary scrawl, the world is gone
For him, unless he left a German will;
But where's the proctor who will ask his son?
In whom his qualities are reigning still,
Except that household virtue, most uncommon,
Of constancy to a bad, ugly woman.

XIII

"God save the king!" It is a large economy
In God to save the like; but if he will
Be saving, all the better; for not one am I
Of those who think damnation better still:
I hardly know too if not quite alone am I
In this small hope of bettering future ill
By circumscribing, with some slight restriction,
The eternity of hell's hot jurisdiction.

XIV

I know this is unpopular; I know
'T is blasphemous; I know one may be damn'd
For hoping no one else may e'er be so;
I know my catechism; I know we are cramm'd
With the best doctrines till we quite o'erflow;
I know that all save England's church have shamm'd,
And that the other twice two hundred churches
And synagogues have made a *damn'd* bad purchase.

XV

God help us all! God help me too! I am,
God knows, as helpless as the devil can wish,
And not a whit more difficult to damn,
Than is to bring to land a late-hook'd fish,
Or to the butcher to purvey the lamb;
Not that I 'm fit for such a noble dish,
As one day will be that immortal fry
Of almost every body born to die.

XVI

Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate,
And nodded o'er his keys; when, lo! there came
A wondrous noise he had not heard of late—
A rushing sound of wind, and stream, and flame;
In short, a roar of things extremely great,
Which would have made aught save a saint exclaim;
But he, with first a start and then a wink,
Said, "There 's another star gone out, I think!"

XVII

But ere he could return to his repose,
A cherub flapp'd his right wing o'er his eyes—
At which Saint Peter yawn'd, and rubb'd his nose:
"Saint porter," said the angel, "prithee rise!"
Waving a goodly wing, which glow'd, as glows
An earthly peacock's tail, with heavenly dyes;
To which the Saint replied, "Well, what's the matter?
Is Lucifer come back with all this clatter?"

XVIII

"No," quoth the cherub; "George the Third is dead."
"And who *is* George the Third?" replied the apostle:
"*What George? what Third?*" "The king of England," said
The angel. "Well! he won't find kings to jostle
Him on his way; but does he wear his head?
Because the last we saw here had a tussle,

And ne'er would have got into heaven's
good graces,
Had he not flung his head in all our
faces.

XIX

"He was, if I remember, king of France;
That head of his, which could not keep
a crown
On earth, yet ventured in my face to
advance
A claim to those of martyrs—like my
own:
If I had had my sword, as I had once
When I cut ears off, I had cut him
down;
But having but my *keys*, and not my
brand,
I only knock'd his head from out his
hand.

XX

"And then he set up such a headless
howl,
That all the saints came out and took
him in;
And there he sits by St. Paul, cheek by
jowl;
That fellow Paul—the parvenù! The
skin

Of Saint Bartholomew, which makes his cowl
In heaven, and upon earth redeem'd his sin,
So as to make a martyr, never sped
Better than did this weak and wooden head.

XXI

"But had it come up here upon its shoulders,
There would have been a different tale to tell:
The fellow-feeling in the saints beholders
Seems to have acted on them like a spell;
And so this very foolish head heaven solders
Back on its trunk: it may be very well,
And seems the custom here to overthrow
Whatever has been wisely done below."

XXII

The angel answer'd, "Peter! do not pout:
The king who comes has head and all entire,
And never knew much what it was about—
He did as doth the puppet by its wire,

And will be judged like all the rest, no doubt:
My business and your own is not to inquire
Into such matters, but to mind our cue—
Which is to act as we are bid to do."

XXIII

While thus they spake, the angelic caravan,
Arriving like a rush of mighty wind,
Cleaving the fields of space, as doth the swan
Some silver stream (say Ganges, Nile, or Inde,
Or Thames, or Tweed), and 'midst them an old man
With an old soul, and both extremely blind,
Halted before the gate, and in his shroud
Seated their fellow-traveller on a cloud.

XXIV

But bringing up the rear of this bright host
A Spirit of a different aspect waved
His wings, like thunder-clouds above some coast
Whose barren beach with frequent wrecks is paved;

His brow was like the deep when tempest-toss'd;
Fierce and unfathomable thoughts engraved
Eternal wrath on his immortal face,
And *where* he gazed a gloom pervaded space.

XXV

As he drew near, he gazed upon the gate
Ne'er to be enter'd more by him or Sin,
With such a glance of supernatural hate,
As made St. Peter wish himself within;
He patter'd with his keys at a great rate,
And sweated through his apostolic skin:
Of course his perspiration was but ichor,
Or some such other spiritual liquor.

XXVI

The very cherubs huddled all together,
Like birds when soars the falcon; and they felt
A tingling to the tip of every feather,
And form'd a circle like Orion's belt
Around their poor old charge; who scarce knew whither
His guards had led him, though they gently dealt
With royal manes (for by many stories,
And true, we learn the angels all are Tories).

XXVII

As things were in this posture, the gate flew
Asunder, and the flashing of its hinges
Flung over space an universal hue
Of many-colour'd flame, until its tinges
Reach'd even our speck of earth, and made a new
Aurora borealis spread its fringes
O'er the North Pole; the same seen, when ice-bound,
By Captain Parry's crew, in "Melville's Sound".

XXVIII

And from the gate thrown open issued beaming
A beautiful and mighty Thing of Light,
Radiant with glory, like a banner streaming
Victorious from some world-o'erthrowing fight:
My poor comparisons must needs be teeming
With earthly likenesses, for here the night
Of clay obscures our best conceptions, saving
Johanna Southcote, or Bob Southey raving.

XXIX

'T was the archangel Michael: all men know
The make of angels and archangels, since
There 's scarce a scribbler has not one to show,
From the fiends' leader to the angels' prince;
There also are some altar-pieces, though
I really can't say that they much evince
One's inner notions of immortal spirits;
But let the connoisseurs explain *their* merits.

XXX

Michael flew forth in glory and in good;
A goodly work of him from whom all glory
And good arise; the portal pass'd—he stood;
Before him the young cherubs and saints hoary—
(I say *young*, begging to be understood
By looks, not years; and should be very sorry
To state, they were not older than St. Peter,
But merely that they seem'd a little sweeter).

XXXI

The cherubs and the saints bow'd down
before
That arch-angelic hierarch, the first
Of essences angelical, who wore
The aspect of a god; but this ne'er
nursed
Pride in his heavenly bosom, in whose
core
No thought, save for his Master's ser-
vice, durst
Intrude, however glorified and high;
He knew him but the viceroy of the sky.

XXXII

He and the sombre, silent Spirit met—
They knew each other both for good
and ill;
Such was their power, that neither could
forget
His former friend and future foe; but
still
There was a high, immortal, proud re-
gret
In either's eye, as if 't were less their
will
Than destiny to make the eternal years
Their date of war, and their "champ clos"
the spheres.

XXXIII

But here they were in neutral space: we know
From Job, that Satan hath the power to pay
A heavenly visit thrice a year or so;
And that "the sons of God", like those of clay,
Must keep him company; and we might show
From the same book, in how polite a way
The dialogue is held between the Powers
Of Good and Evil—but 't would take up hours.

XXXIV

And this is not a theologic tract,
To prove with Hebrew and with Arabic,
If Job be allegory or a fact,
But a true narrative; and thus I pick
From out the whole but such and such an act
As sets aside the slightest thought of trick.
'T is every tittle true, beyond suspicion,
And accurate as any other vision.

XXXV

The spirits were in neutral space, before
The gate of heaven; like eastern thresholds is
The place where Death's grand cause is argued o'er,
And souls despatch'd to that world or to this;
And therefore Michael and the other wore
A civil aspect: though they did not kiss,
Yet still between his Darkness and his Brightness
There pass'd a mutual glance of great politeness.

XXXVI

The Archangel bow'd, not like a modern beau,
But with a graceful oriental bend,
Pressing one radiant arm just where below
The heart in good men is supposed to tend;
He turn'd as to an equal, not too low,
But kindly; Satan met his ancient friend
With more hauteur, as might an old Castilian
Poor noble meet a mushroom rich civilian.

XXXVII

He merely bent his diabolic brow
An instant; and then raising it, he stood
In act to assert his right or wrong, and show
Cause why King George by no means could or should
Make out a case to be exempt from woe
Eternal, more than other kings, endued
With better sense and hearts, whom history mentions,
Who long have "paved hell with their good intentions".

XXXVIII

Michael began: "What wouldst thou with this man,
Now dead, and brought before the Lord? What ill
Hath he wrought since his mortal race began,
That thou canst claim him? Speak! and do thy will,
If it be just: if in this earthly span
He hath been greatly failing to fulfil
His duties as a king and mortal, say,
And he is thine; if not, let him have way."

XXXIX

"Michael!" replied the Prince of Air,
"even here,
Before the Gate of him thou servest, must
I claim my subject: and will make appear
That as he was my worshipper in dust,
So shall he be in spirit, although dear
To thee and thine, because nor wine nor lust
Were of his weaknesses; yet on the throne
He reign'd o'er millions to serve me alone.

XL

"Look to *our* earth, or rather *mine*; it was,
Once, *more* thy master's: but I triumph not
In this poor planet's conquest; nor, alas!
Need he thou servest envy me my lot:
With all the myriads of bright worlds which pass
In worship round him, he may have forgot
Yon weak creation of such paltry things:
I think few worth damnation save their kings,—

XLI

"And these but as a kind of quit-rent, to
Assert my right as lord; and even had
I such an inclination, 'twere (as you
Well know) superfluous; they are
grown so bad,
That hell has nothing better left to do
Than leave them to themselves: so
much more mad
And evil by their own internal curse,
Heaven cannot make them better, nor I
worse.

XLII

"Look to the earth, I said, and say
again:
When this old, blind, mad, helpless,
weak, poor worm
Began in youth's first bloom and flush
to reign,
The world and he both wore a different
form,
And much of earth and all the watery
plain
Of ocean call'd him king: through
many a storm
His isles had floated on the abyss of
time;
For the rough virtues chose them for
their clime.

XLIII

"He came to his sceptre young; he leaves it old:
Look to the state in which he found his realm,
And left it; and his annals too behold,
How to a minion first he gave the helm;
How grew upon his heart a thirst for gold,
The beggar's vice, which can but overwhelm
The meanest hearts; and for the rest, but glance
Thine eye along America and France.

XLIV

"'Tis true, he was a tool from first to last
(I have the workmen safe); but as a tool
So let him be consumed. From out the past
Of ages, since mankind have known the rule
Of monarchs — from the bloody rolls amass'd
Of sin and slaughter—from the Cæsars' school,

Take the worst pupil; and produce a reign
More drench'd with gore, more cumber'd with the slain.

XLV

"He ever warr'd with freedom and the free:
Nations as men, home subjects, foreign foes,
So that they utter'd the word "Liberty!"
Found George the Third their first opponent. Whose
History was ever stain'd as his will be
With national and individual woes?
I grant his household abstinence; I grant
His neutral virtues, which most monarchs want;

XLVI

"I know he was a constant consort; own
He was a decent sire, and middling lord.
All this is much, and most upon a throne;
As temperance, if at Apicius' board,
Is more than at an anchorite's supper shown.
I grant him all the kindest can accord;

And this was well for him, but not for those
Millions who found him what oppression chose.

XLVII

"The New World shook him off; the Old yet groans
Beneath what he and his prepared, if not
Completed: he leaves heirs on many thrones
To all his vices, without what begot
Compassion for him—his tame virtues; drones
Who sleep, or despots who have now forgot
A lesson which shall be re-taught them, wake
Upon the thrones of earth; but let them quake!

XLVIII

"Five millions of the primitive, who hold
The faith which makes ye great on earth, implored
A *part* of that vast *all* they held of old,—
Freedom to worship not alone your Lord,

Michael, but you, and you, Saint Peter! Cold
Must be your souls, if you have not abhorr'd
The foe to Catholic participation
In all the license of a Christian nation.

XLIX

"True! he allow'd them to pray God: but as
A consequence of prayer, refused the law
Which would have placed them upon the same base
With those who did not hold the saints in awe."
But here Saint Peter started from his place,
And cried, "You may the prisoner withdraw:
Ere heaven shall ope her portals to this Guelph,
While I am guard, may I be damn'd myself!

L

"Sooner will I with Cerberus exchange
My office (and *his* is no sinecure)
Than see this royal Bedlam bigot range
The azure fields of heaven, of that be sure!"

"Saint!" replied Satan, "you do well to avenge
The wrongs he made your satellites endure;
And if to this exchange you should be given,
I'll try to coax *our* Cerberus up to heaven."

LI

Here Michael interposed: "Good saint! and devil!
Pray, not so fast; you both outrun discretion.
Saint Peter! you were wont to be more civil:
Satan! excuse this warmth of his expression,
And condescension to the vulgar's level:
Even saints sometimes forget themselves in session.
Have you got more to say?"—"No."—"If you please,
I'll trouble you to call your witnesses."

LII

Then Satan turn'd and waved his swarthy hand,
Which stirr'd with its electric qualities

Clouds farther off than we can understand,
Although we find him sometimes in our skies;
Infernal thunder shook both sea and land
In all the planets, and hell's batteries
Let off the artillery, which Milton mentions
As one of Satan's most sublime inventions.

LIII

This was a signal unto such damn'd souls
As have the privilege of their damnation
Extended far beyond the mere controls
Of worlds past, present, or to come; no station
Is theirs particularly in the rolls
Of hell assign'd; but where their inclination
Or business carries them in search of game,
They may range freely—being damn'd the same.

LIV

They are proud of this—as very well they may,
It being a sort of knighthood, or gilt key

Stuck in their loins; or like to an "entré"
Up the back stairs, or such free-masonry.
I borrow my comparisons from clay,
Being clay myself. Let not those spirits be
Offended with such base low likenesses;
We know their posts are nobler far than these.

LV

When the great signal ran from heaven to hell—
About ten million times the distance reckon'd
From our sun to its earth, as we can tell
How much time it takes up, even to a second,
For every ray that travels to dispel
The fogs of London, through which, dimly beacon'd,
The weathercocks are gilt some thrice a year,
If that the *summer* is not too severe:—

LVI

I say that I can tell—'t was half a minute:
I know the solar beams take up more time

Ere, pack'd up for their journey, they begin it;
But then their telegraph is less sublime,
And if they ran a race, they would not win it
'Gainst Satan's couriers bound for their own clime.
The sun takes up some years for every ray
To reach its goal—the devil not half a day.

LVII

Upon the verge of space, about the size
Of half-a-crown, a little speck appear'd
(I 've seen a something like it in the skies
In the Ægean, e'er a squall); it near'd,
And, growing bigger, took another guise;
Like an aërial ship it tack'd, and steer'd,
Or *was* steer'd (I am doubtful of the grammar
Of the last phrase, which makes the stanza stammer;—

LVIII

But take your choice); and then it grew a cloud;
And so it was—a cloud of witnesses.

But such a cloud! No land e'er saw a crowd
Of locusts numerous as the heavens saw these;
They shadow'd with their myriads space; their loud
And varied cries were like those of wild geese
(If nations may be liken'd to a goose),
And realized the phrase of "hell broke loose".

LIX

Here crash'd a sturdy oath of stout John Bull,
Who damn'd away his eyes as heretofore:
There Paddy brogued "By Jasus!"—"What's your wull?"
The temperate Scot exclaim'd: the French ghost swore
In certain terms I sha'n't translate in full,
As the first coachman will; and 'midst the war,
The voice of Jonathan was heard to express,
"*Our* president is going to war, I guess."

LX

Besides there were the Spaniard, Dutch, and Dane;
In short, an universal shoal of shades,
From Otaheite's isle to Salisbury Plain,
Of all climes and professions, years and trades,
Ready to swear against the good king's reign,
Bitter as clubs in cards are against spades:
All summon'd by this grand "subpœna", to
Try if kings mayn't be damned like me or you.

LXI

When Michael saw this host, he first grew pale,
As angels can; next, like Italian twilight,
He turn'd all colours—as a peacock's tail,
Or sunset streaming through a Gothic skylight
In some old abbey, or a trout not stale,
Or distant lightning on the horizon *by* night,
Or a fresh rainbow, or a grand review
Of thirty regiments in red, green, and blue.

LXII

Then he address'd himself to Satan: "Why—
My good old friend, for such I deem you, though
Our different parties make us fight so shy,
I ne'er mistake you for a *personal* foe;
Our difference is *political*, and I
Trust that, whatever may occur below
You know my great respect for you: and this
Makes me regret whate'er you do amiss—

LXIII

"Why, my dear Lucifer, would you abuse
My call for witnesses? I did not mean
That you should half of earth and hell produce;
'T is even superfluous, since two honest, clean,
True testimonies are enough: we lose
Our time, nay, our eternity, between
The accusation and defence: if we
Hear both, 't will stretch our immortality."

LXIV

Satan replied, "To me the matter is
Indifferent, in a personal point of view:

I can have fifty better souls than this
With far less trouble than we have gone through
Already; and I merely argued his
Late majesty of Britain's case with you
Upon a point of form: you may dispose
Of him; I've kings enough below, God knows!"

LXV

Thus spoke the Demon (late call'd "multifaced"
By multo-scribbling Southey). "Then we'll call
One or two persons of the myriads placed
Around our congress, and dispense with all
The rest," quoth Michael: "Who may be so graced
As to speak first? there's choice enough—who shall
It be?" Then Satan answer'd, "There are many;
But you may choose Jack Wilkes as well as any."

LXVI

A merry, cock-eyed, curious-looking sprite
Upon the instant started from the throng,

Dress'd in a fashion now forgotten quite;
For all the fashions of the flesh stick long
By people in the next world; where unite
All the costumes since Adam's, right or wrong,
From Eve's fig-leaf down to the petticoat,
Almost as scanty, of days less remote.

LXVII

The spirit look'd around upon the crowds
Assembled, and exclaim'd, "My friends of all
The spheres, we shall catch cold amongst these clouds;
So let 's to business: why this general call?
If those are freeholders I see in shrouds,
And 't is for an election that they bawl,
Behold a candidate with unturn'd coat!
Saint Peter, may I count upon your vote?"

LXVIII

"Sir," replied Michael, you mistake; these things
Are of a former life, and what we do
Above is more august; to judge of kings
Is the tribunal met: so now you know."

"Then I presume those gentlemen with wings,"
Said Wilkes, "are cherubs; and that soul below
Looks much like George the Third, but to my mind
A good deal older—Bless me! is he blind?"

LXIX

"He is what you behold him, and his doom
Depends upon his deeds," the Angel said.
"If you have aught to arraign in him, the tomb
Gives license to the humblest beggar's head
To lift itself against the loftiest."—"Some,"
Said Wilkes, "don't wait to see them laid in lead,
For such a liberty—and I, for one,
Have told them what I thought beneath the sun."

LXX

"*Above* the sun repeat, then, what thou hast
To urge against him," said the Archangel. "Why,"

Replied the spirit, "since old scores are past,
Must I turn evidence? In faith, not I.
Besides, I beat him hollow at the last,
With all his Lords and Commons: in the sky
I don't like ripping up old stories, since
His conduct was but natural in a prince.

LXXI

"Foolish, no doubt, and wicked, to oppress
A poor unlucky devil without a shilling;
But then I blame the man himself much less
Than Bute and Grafton, and shall be unwilling
To see him punish'd here for their excess,
Since they were both damn'd long ago, and still in
Their place below: for me, I have forgiven,
And vote his 'habeas corpus' into heaven."

LXXII

"Wilkes," said the Devil, "I understand all this;
You turn'd to half a courtier ere you died,

And seem to think it would not be amiss
To grow a whole one on the other side
Of Charon's ferry; you forget that *his*
Reign is concluded; whatsoe'er betide,
He won't be sovereign more: you've lost your labour,
For at the best he will but be your neighbour.

LXXIII

"However, I knew what to think of it,
When I beheld you in your jesting way,
Flitting and whispering round about the spit
Where Belial, upon duty for the day,
With Fox's lard was basting William Pitt,
His pupil; I knew what to think, I say:
That fellow even in hell breeds farther ills;
I'll have him *gagg'd*—'t was one of his own bills.

LXXIV

"Call Junius!" From the crowd a shadow stalk'd,
And at the name there was a general squeeze,

So that the very ghosts no longer walk'd
In comfort, at their own aërial ease,
But were all ramm'd, and jamm'd (but to be balk'd,
As we shall see), and jostled hands and knees,
Like wind compress'd and pent within a bladder,
Or like a human colic, which is sadder.

LXXV

The shadow came—a tall, thin, gray-hair'd figure,
That look'd as it had been a shade on earth;
Quick in its motions, with an air of vigour,
But nought to mark its breeding or its birth:
Now it wax'd little, then again grew bigger,
With now an air of gloom, or savage mirth;
But as you gazed upon its features, they
Changed every instant—to *what*, none could say.

LXXVI

The more intently the ghosts gazed, the less
Could they distinguish whose the features were;

The Devil himself seem'd puzzled even to
guess;
They varied like a dream—now here,
now there;
And several people swore from out the
press,
They knew him perfectly; and one
could swear
He was his father: upon which another
Was sure he was his mother's cousin's
brother:

LXXVII

Another, that he was a duke, or knight,
An orator, a lawyer, or a priest,
A nabob, a man-midwife: but the wight
Mysterious changed his countenance at
least
As oft as they their minds: though in
full sight
He stood, the puzzle only was increased;
The man was a phantasmagoria in
Himself—he was so volatile and thin.

LXXVIII

The moment that you had pronounced
him *one*,
Presto! his face changed, and he was
another;

And when that change was hardly well
put on,
It varied, till I don't think his own
mother
(If that he had a mother) would her son
Have known, he shifted so from one to
t' other;
Till guessing from a pleasure grew a task,
At this epistolary "Iron Mask".

LXXIX

For sometimes he like Cerberus would
seem—
"Three gentlemen at once" (as sagely
says
Good Mrs. Malaprop); then you might deem
That he was not even *one*; now many
rays
Were flashing round him; and now a
thick steam
Hid him from sight—like fogs on Lon-
don days:
Now Burke, now Tooke, he grew to
people's fancies,
And certes often like Sir Philip Francis.

LXXX

I 've an hypothesis—'t is quite my own;
I never let it out till now, for fear

Of doing people harm about the throne,
And injuring some minister or peer,
On whom the stigma might perhaps be blown;
It is—my gentle public, lend thine ear!
'Tis, that what Junius we are wont to call
Was *really, truly,* nobody at all.

LXXXI

I don't see wherefore letters should not be
Written without hands, since we daily view
Them written without heads; and books, we see,
Are fill'd as well without the latter too:
And really till we fix on somebody
For certain sure to claim them as his due,
Their author, like the Niger's mouth, will bother
The world to say if *there* be mouth or author.

LXXXII

"And who and what art thou?" the Archangel said.
"For *that* you may consult my title-page,"

Replied this mighty shadow of a shade:
"If I have kept my secret half an age,
I scarce shall tell it now."—"Canst thou upbraid,"
Continued Michael, "George Rex, or allege
Aught further?" Junius answer'd, "You had better
First ask him for *his* answer to my letter:

LXXXIII

"My charges upon record will outlast
The brass of both his epitaph and tomb."
"Repent'st thou not," said Michael, "of some past
Exaggeration? something which may doom
Thyself if false, as him if true? Thou wast
Too bitter—is it not so?—in thy gloom
Of passion?"—"Passion!" cried the phantom dim,
"I loved my country, and I hated him.

LXXXIV

"What I have written, I have written: let
The rest be on his head or mine!" So spoke

Old "Nominis Umbra"; and while speaking yet,
Away he melted in celestial smoke.
Then Satan said to Michael, "Don't forget
To call George Washington, and John Horne Tooke,
And Franklin;"—but at this time there was heard
A cry for room, though not a phantom stirr'd.

LXXXV

At length with jostling, elbowing, and the aid
Of cherubim appointed to that post,
The devil Asmodeus to the circle made
His way, and look'd as if his journey cost
Some trouble. When his burden down he laid,
"What's this?" cried Michael; "why, 't is not a ghost?"
"I know it," quoth the incubus; "but he
Shall be one, if you leave the affair to me.

LXXXVI

"Confound the renegado! I have sprain'd
My left wing, he 's so heavy; one would think

Some of his works about his neck were chain'd.
But to the point; while hovering o'er the brink
Of Skiddaw (where as usual it still rain'd),
I saw a taper, far below me, wink,
And stooping, caught this fellow at a libel—
No less on history than the Holy Bible.

LXXXVII

"The former is the devil's scripture, and
The latter yours, good Michael: so the affair
Belongs to all of us, you understand.
I snatch'd him up just as you see him there,
And brought him off for sentence out of hand:
I've scarcely been ten minutes in the air—
At least a quarter it can hardly be:
I dare say that his wife is still at tea."

LXXXVIII

Here Satan said, "I know this man of old,
And have expected him for some time here;

A sillier fellow you will scarce behold,
Or more conceited in his petty sphere:
But surely it was not worth while to fold
Such trash below your wing, Asmodeus dear:
We had the poor wretch safe (without being bored
With carriage) coming of his own accord.

LXXXIX

"But since he's here, let's see what he has done."
"Done!" cried Asmodeus, "he anticipates
The very business you are now upon,
And scribbles as if head clerk to the Fates.
Who knows to what his ribaldry may run,
When such an ass as this, like Balaam's, prates?"
"Let's hear," quoth Michael, "what he has to say;
You know we're bound to that in every way."

XC

Now the bard, glad to get an audience, which
By no means often was his case below,

Began to cough, and hawk, and hem, and pitch
His voice into that awful note of woe
To all unhappy hearers within reach
Of poets when the tide of rhyme's in flow;
But stuck fast with his first hexameter,
Not one of all whose gouty feet would stir.

XCI

But ere the spavin'd dactyls could be spurr'd
Into recitative, in great dismay,
Both cherubim and seraphim were heard
To murmur loudly through their long array;
And Michael rose ere he could get a word
Of all his founder'd verses under way,
And cried, "For God's sake, stop, my friend! 'twere best—
Non Di, non homines—you know the rest."

XCII

A general bustle spread throughout the throng,
Which seem'd to hold all verse in detestation;
The angels had of course enough of song
When upon service; and the generation

Of ghosts had heard too much in life, not long
Before, to profit by a new occasion;
The monarch, mute till then, exclaim'd, "What! what!
Pye come again? No more—no more of that!"

XCIII

The tumult grew; an universal cough
Convulsed the skies, as during a debate,
When Castlereagh has been up long enough
(Before he was first minister of state,
I mean—the *slaves hear now*); some cried "Off, off!"
As at a farce; till, grown quite desperate,
The bard Saint Peter pray'd to interpose
(Himself an author) only for his prose.

XCIV

The varlet was not an ill-favour'd knave;
A good deal like a vulture in the face,
With a hook nose and a hawk's eye, which gave
A smart and sharper-looking sort of grace

To his whole aspect, which, though rather
grave,
Was by no means so ugly as his case;
But that, indeed, was hopeless as can be,
Quite a poetic felony "*de se*".

XCV

Then Michael blew his trump, and still'd
the noise
With one still greater, as is yet the
mode
On earth besides; except some grumbling
voice,
Which now and then will make a
slight inroad
Upon decorous silence, few will twice
Lift up their lungs when fairly over-
crow'd;
And now the bard could plead his own
bad cause,
With all the attitudes of self-applause.

XCVI

He said—(I only give the heads)—he said,
He meant no harm in scribbling; 't was
his way
Upon all topics; 't was, besides, his bread,
Of which he butter'd both sides; 't would
delay

Too long the assembly (he was pleas'd to dread),
And take up rather more time than a day,
To name his works—he would but cite a few—
"Wat Tyler"—"Rhymes on Blenheim"—"Waterloo".

XCVII

He had written praises of a regicide;
He had written praises of all kings whatever;
He had written for republics far and wide,
And then against them bitterer than ever;
For pantisocracy he once had cried
Aloud—a scheme less moral than 't was clever;
Then grew a hearty anti-Jacobin—
Had turn'd his coat—and would have turn'd his skin.

XCVIII

He had sung against all battles, and again
In their high praise and glory; he had call'd

Reviewing "the ungentle craft", and then
Become as base a critic as e'er crawl'd—
Fed, paid, and pamper'd by the very men
By whom his muse and morals had been maul'd:
He had written much blank verse, and blanker prose,
And more of both than anybody knows.

XCIX

He had written Wesley's life:—here turning round
To Satan, "Sir, I'm ready to write yours,
In two octavo volumes, nicely bound,
With notes and preface, all that most allures
The pious purchaser; and there's no ground
For fear, for I can choose my own reviewers:
So let me have the proper documents,
That I may add you to my other saints."

C

Satan bow'd, and was silent. "Well, if you,
With amiable modesty, decline

My offer, what says Michael? There are few
Whose memoirs could be render'd more divine.
Mine is a pen of all work; not so new
As it was once, but I would make you shine
Like your own trumpet. By the way, my own
Has more of brass in it, and is as well blown.

CI

"But talking about trumpets, here's my Vision!
Now you shall judge, all people; yes, you shall
Judge with my judgment, and by my decision
Be guided who shall enter heaven or fall.
I settle all these things by intuition,
Times present, past, to come, heaven, hell, and all,
Like King Alfonso. When I thus see double,
I save the Deity some worlds of trouble."

CII

He ceased, and drew forth an MS.; and no
Persuasion on the part of devils, or saints,

Or angels, now could stop the torrent; so
He read the first three lines of the contents;
But at the fourth, the whole spiritual show
Had vanish'd, with variety of scents,
Ambrosial and sulphureous, as they sprang,
Like lightning, off from his "melodious twang".

CIII

Those grand heroics acted as a spell:
The angels stopp'd their ears and plied their pinions;
The devils ran howling, deafen'd, down to hell;
The ghosts fled, gibbering, for their own dominions—
(For 't is not yet decided where they dwell,
And I leave every man to his opinions);
Michael took refuge in his trump—but, lo!
His teeth were set on edge, he could not blow!

CIV

Saint Peter, who has hitherto been known
For an impetuous saint, upraised his keys,

And at the fifth line knock'd the poet down;
Who fell like Phaeton, but more at ease,
Into his lake, for there he did not drown;
A different web being by the Destinies
Woven for the Laureate's final wreath, whene'er
Reform shall happen either here or there.

CV

He first sank to the bottom—like his works,
But soon rose to the surface—like himself;
For all corrupted things are buoy'd like corks,
By their own rottenness, light as an elf,
Or wisp that flits o'er a morass: he lurks,
It may be, still, like dull books on a shelf,
In his own den, to scrawl some "Life" or "Vision",
As Welborn says—"the devil turn'd precisian".

CVI

As for the rest, to come to the conclusion
Of this true dream, the telescope is gone

Which kept my optics free from all delusion,
And show'd me what I in my turn have shown;
All I saw farther, in the last confusion,
Was, that King George slipp'd into heaven for one;
And when the tumult dwindled to a calm,
I left him practising the hundredth psalm.

The Destruction of Sennacherib

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on
the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple
and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like
stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep
Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when Summer
is green,
That host with their banners at sunset
were seen:
Like the leaves of the forest when Autumn
hath blown,
That host on the morrow lay wither'd
and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings
on the blast,
And breathed in the face of the foe as
he pass'd;

And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heav'd, and for ever grew still!

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there roll'd not the breath of his pride:
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Asshur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte

'T is done—but yesterday a King!
And arm'd with Kings to strive—
And now thou art a nameless thing:
So abject—yet alive!
Is this the man of thousand thrones,
Who strew'd our earth with hostile bones,
And can he thus survive?
Since he, miscall'd the Morning Star,
Nor man nor fiend hath fallen so far.

Ill-minded man! why scourge thy kind
Who bow'd so low the knee?
By gazing on thyself grown blind,
Thou taught'st the rest to see.
With might unquestion'd, — power to save,—
Thine only gift hath been the grave,
To those that worshipp'd thee;
Nor till thy fall could mortals guess
Ambition's less than littleness!

Thanks for that lesson—it will teach
  To after-warriors more,
Than high Philosophy can preach,
  And vainly preach'd before.
That spell upon the minds of men
Breaks never to unite again,
  That led them to adore
Those Pagod things of sabre sway,
With fronts of brass, and feet of clay.

The triumph, and the vanity,
  The rapture of the strife—
The earthquake voice of Victory,
  To thee the breath of life;
The sword, the sceptre, and that sway
Which man seem'd made but to obey,
  Wherewith renown was rife—
All quell'd!—Dark Spirit! what must be
The madness of thy memory!

The Desolator desolate!
  The Victor overthrown!
The Arbiter of others' fate
  A Suppliant for his own!
Is it some yet imperial hope,
That with such change can calmly cope?
  Or dread of death alone?
To die a prince—or live a slave—
Thy choice is most ignobly brave!

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE

He who of old would rend the oak,
  Dream'd not of the rebound:
Chain'd by the trunk he vainly broke—
  Alone—how look'd he round?
Thou, in the sternness of thy strength,
An equal deed has done at length,
  And darker fate hast found:
He fell, the forest prowlers' prey;
But thou must eat thy heart away!

The Roman, when his burning heart
  Was slaked with blood of Rome,
Threw down the dagger—dared depart
  In savage grandeur, home—
He dared depart in utter scorn
Of men that such a yoke had borne,
  Yet left him such a doom!
His only glory was that hour
Of self-upheld abandon'd power.

The Spaniard, when the lust of sway
  Had lost its quickening spell,
Cast crowns for rosaries away,
  An empire for a cell;
A strict accountant of his beads,
A subtle disputant on creeds,
  His dotage trifled well:
Yet better had he neither known
A bigot's shrine, nor despot's throne.

But thou—from thy reluctant hand
  The thunderbolt is wrung—
Too late thou leav'st the high command
  To which thy weakness clung;
All Evil Spirit as thou art,
It is enough to grieve the heart
  To see thine own unstrung;
To think that God's fair world hath been
The footstool of a thing so mean;

And Earth hath spilt her blood for him,
  Who thus can hoard his own!
And Monarchs bow'd the trembling limb,
  And thank'd him for a throne!
Fair Freedom! we may hold thee dear,
When thus thy mightiest foes their fear
  In humblest guise have shown.
Oh! ne'er may tyrant leave behind
A brighter name to lure mankind!

Thine evil deeds are writ in gore,
  Nor written thus in vain—
Thy triumphs tell of fame no more,
  Or deepen every stain:
If thou hadst died as honour dies,
Some new Napoleon might arise,
  To shame the world again—
But who would soar the solar height,
To set in such a starless night?

Weigh'd in the balance, hero dust
  Is vile as vulgar clay;
Thy scales, Mortality! are just
  To all that pass away:
But yet methought the living great
Some higher sparks should animate,
  To dazzle and dismay:
Nor deem'd Contempt could thus make
    mirth
Of these, the Conquerors of the earth.

And she, proud Austria's mournful flower,
  Thy still imperial bride;
How bears her breast the torturing hour?
  Still clings she to thy side?
Must she too bend, must she too share
Thy late repentance, long despair,
  Thou throneless Homicide?
If still she loves thee, hoard that gem;
'T is worth thy vanish'd diadem!

Then haste thee to thy sullen Isle,
  And gaze upon the sea;
That element may meet thy smile—
  It ne'er was ruled by thee!
Or trace with thine all idle hand,
In loitering mood upon the sand,
  That Earth is now as free!
That Corinth's pedagogue hath now
Transferr'd his by-word to thy brow.

ODE TO

Thou Timour! in his captive's cage
What thoughts will there be thine,
While brooding in thy prison'd rage?
But one—The "world *was* mine!"
Unless, like he of Babylon,
All sense is with thy sceptre gone,
Life will not long confine
That spirit pour'd so widely forth—
So long obey'd—so little worth!

Or, like the thief of fire from heaven,
Wilt thou withstand the shock?
And share with him, the unforgiven,
His vulture and his rock?
Foredoom'd by God—by man accurst,
And that last act, though not thy worst,
The very Fiend's arch mock;
He in his fall preserved his pride,
And, if a mortal, had as proudly died!

There was a day—there was an hour,
While earth was Gaul's—Gaul thine—
When that immeasurable power
Unsated to resign
Had been an act of purer fame,
Than gathers round Marengo's name,
And gilded thy decline,
Through the long twilight of all time,
Despite some passing clouds of crime.

But thou forsooth must be a king,
And don the purple vest,
As if that foolish robe could wring
Remembrance from thy breast.
Where is that faded garment? where
The gewgaws thou wert fond to wear,
The star—the string—the crest?
Vain froward child of empire! say,
Are all thy playthings snatch'd away?

Where may the wearied eye repose,
When gazing on the Great;
Where neither guilty glory glows,
Nor despicable state?
Yes—one—the first—the last—the best—
The Cincinnatus of the West,
Whom envy dared not hate,
Bequeath the name of Washington,
To make man blush there was but one!

Ode from the French

I

We do not curse thee, Waterloo!
Though Freedom's blood thy plain bedew;
There 't was shed, but is not sunk—
Rising from each gory trunk,
Like the water-spout from ocean,
With a strong and growing motion—
It soars, and mingles in the air,
With that of lost Labedoyère—
With that of him whose honour'd grave
Contains the "bravest of the brave".
A crimson cloud it spreads and glows,
But shall return to whence it rose;
When 't is full 't will burst asunder—
Never yet was heard such thunder,
As then shall shake the world with wonder—
Never yet was seen such lightning
As o'er heaven shall then be bright'ning!
Like the Wormwood Star foretold
By the sainted Seer of old,
Show'ring down a fiery flood,
Turning rivers into blood.

II

The Chief has fallen, but not by you,
Vanquishers of Waterloo!
When the soldier citizen
Sway'd not o'er his fellow-men—
Save in deeds that led them on
Where Glory smiled on Freedom's son—
Who, of all the despots banded,
With that youthful chief competed?
Who could boast o'er France defeated,
Till lone Tyranny commanded?
Till, goaded by ambition's sting,
The Hero sunk into the King?
Then he fell:—so perish all,
Who would men by man enthrall!

III

And thou, too, of the snow-white plume!
Whose realm refused thee ev'n a tomb;
Better hadst thou still been leading
France o'er hosts of hirelings bleeding,
Than sold thyself to death and shame
For a meanly royal name;
Such as he of Naples wears,
Who thy blood-bought title bears.
Little didst thou deem, when dashing
On thy war-horse through the ranks,
Like a stream which burst its banks,
While helmets cleft, and sabres clashing,

Shone and shiver'd fast around thee—
Of the fate at last which found thee:
Was that haughty plume laid low
By a slave's dishonest blow?
Once — as the Moon sways o'er the tide,
It roll'd in air, the warrior's guide;
Through the smoke-created night
Of the black and sulphurous fight,
The soldier raised his seeking eye
To catch that crest's ascendancy—
And as it onward rolling rose,
So moved his heart upon our foes.
There, where death's brief pang was quickest,
And the battle's wreck lay thickest,
Strew'd beneath the advancing banner
Of the eagle's burning crest—
(There with thunder-clouds to fan her,
Who could then her wing arrest—
Victory beaming from her breast?)
While the broken line enlarging
Fell, or fled along the plain;
There be sure was Murat charging!
There he ne'er shall charge again!

IV

O'er glories gone the invaders march,
Weeps Triumph o'er each levell'd arch—

But let Freedom rejoice,
With her heart in her voice;
But, her hand on her sword,
Doubly shall she be adored;
France hath twice too well been taught
The "moral lesson" dearly bought—
Her safety sits not on a throne,
With Capet or Napoleon!
But in equal rights and laws,
Hearts and hands in one great cause—
Freedom, such as God hath given
Unto all beneath his heaven,
With their breath, and from their birth,
Though Guilt would sweep it from the earth;
With a fierce and lavish hand
Scattering nations' wealth like sand;
Pouring nations' blood like water,
In imperial seas of slaughter!

V

But the heart and the mind,
And the voice of mankind,
Shall arise in communion—
And who shall resist that proud union?
The time is past when swords subdued—
Man may die—the soul's renew'd:
Even in this low world of care
Freedom ne'er shall want an heir;

Millions breathe but to inherit
Her for ever bounding spirit—
When once more her hosts assemble,
Tyrants shall believe and tremble—
Smile they at this idle threat?
Crimson tears will follow yet.

Napoleon

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE"

The fool of false dominion—and a kind
Of bastard Cæsar, following him of old
With steps unequal; for the Roman's mind
Was modell'd in a less terrestrial mould,
With passions fiercer, yet a judgment cold,
And an immortal instinct which redeem'd
The frailties of a heart so soft, yet bold,
Alcides with a distaff now he seem'd
At Cleopatra's feet,—and now himself he beam'd,

And came—and saw—and conquer'd! But the man
Who would have tamed his eagles down to flee,
Like a train'd falcon, in the Gallic van,
Which he, in sooth, long led to victory,

With a deaf heart which never seem'd to be
A listener to itself, was strangely fram'd;
With but one weakest weakness — vanity,
Coquettish in ambition—still he aim'd—
At what? Can he avouch — or answer what he claim'd?

And would be all or nothing—nor could wait
For the sure grave to level him; few years
Had fixed him with the Cæsars in his fate,
On whom we tread: For *this* the conqueror rears
The arch of triumph! and for this the tears
And blood of earth flow on as they have flow'd,
An universal deluge, which appears
Without an ark for wretched man's abode,
And ebbs but to reflow!—Renew thy rainbow, God!

. . . . . .

There sunk the greatest, nor the worst of men,
Whose spirit, antithetically mixt,

One moment of the mightiest, and again
On little objects with like firmness fixt;
Extreme in all things! hadst thou been betwixt,
Thy throne had still been thine, or never been;
For daring made thy rise as fall: thou seek'st
Even now to re-assume the imperial mien,
And shake again the world, the Thunderer of the scene!

. . . . . .

But quiet to quick bosoms is a hell,
And *there* hath been thy bane; there is a fire
And motion of the soul which will not dwell
In its own narrow being but aspire
Beyond the fitting medium of desire;
And, but once kindled, quenchless evermore,
Preys upon high adventure, nor can tire
Of aught but rest; a fever at the core,
Fatal to him who bears, to all who ever bore.

This makes the madmen who have made men mad
By their contagion! Conquerors and Kings,

Founders of sects and systems, to whom add
Sophists, Bards, Statesmen, all unquiet things
Which stir too strongly the soul's secret springs,
And are themselves the fools to those they fool;
Envied, yet how unenviable! what stings
Are theirs! One breast laid open were a school
Which would unteach mankind the lust to shine or rule.

Waterloo

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD'S PILGRIMAGE"

Stop! for thy tread is on an Empire's dust!
An Earthquake's spoil is sepulchred below!
Is the spot mark'd with no colossal bust?
Nor column trophied for triumphal show?
None; but the moral's truth tells simpler so,
As the ground was before, thus let it be;—
How that red rain hath made the harvest grow!
And is this all the world has gain'd by thee,
Thou first and last of fields! king-making Victory?

. . . . . .

There was a sound of revelry by night,
And Belgium's capital had gather'd then

Her Beauty and her Chivalry, and bright
The lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men;
A thousand hearts beat happily; and when
Music arose with its voluptuous swell,
Soft eyes look'd love to eyes which spake again,
And all went merry as a marriage-bell;
But hush! hark! a deep sound strikes like a rising knell!

Did ye not hear it?—No; 't was but the wind,
Or the car rattling o'er the stony street;
On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;
No sleep till morn, when Youth and Pleasure meet
To chase the glowing Hours with flying feet—
But hark!—that heavy sound breaks in once more
As if the clouds its echo would repeat;
And nearer, clearer, deadlier than before!
Arm! arm! it is—it is—the cannon's opening roar!

Within a window'd niche of that high hall
Sate Brunswick's fated chieftain; he did hear
That sound the first amidst the festival,
And caught its tone with Death's prophetic ear;
And when they smiled because he deem'd it near,
His heart more truly knew that peal too well
Which stretch'd his father on a bloody bier,
And roused the vengeance blood alone could quell;
He rush'd into the field, and, foremost fighting, fell.

Ah! then and there was hurrying to and fro,
And gathering tears, and tremblings of distress,
And cheeks all pale, which but an hour ago
Blush'd at the praise of their own loveliness;
And there were sudden partings, such as press
The life from out young hearts, and choking sighs

Which ne'er might be repeated; who could guess
If ever more should meet those mutual eyes,
Since upon night so sweet such awful morn could rise!

And there was mounting in hot haste: the steed,
The mustering squadron, and the clattering car,
Went pouring forward with impetuous speed,
And swiftly forming in the ranks of war;
And the deep thunder peal on peal afar;
And near, the beat of the alarming drum
Roused up the soldier ere the morning star;
While throng'd the citizens with terror dumb,
Or whispering, with white lips—"The foe! They come! they come!"

And wild and high the "Cameron's gathering" rose!
The war-note of Lochiel, which Albyn's hills

Have heard, and heard, too, have her
Saxon foes:—
How in the noon of night that pibroch
thrills,
Savage and shrill! But with the breath
which fills
Their mountain-pipe, so fill the moun-
taineers
With the fierce native daring which in-
stils
The stirring memory of a thousand
years,
And Evans, Donald's fame rings in each
clansman's ears!

And Ardennes waves above them her
green leaves,
Dewy with Nature's tear-drops, as they
pass,
Grieving; if aught inanimate e'er grieves,
Over the unreturning brave, —alas!
Ere evening to be trodden like the
grass
Which now beneath them, but above
shall grow
In its next verdure, when this fiery
mass
Of living valour, rolling on the foe,
And burning with high hope, shall moulder
cold and low.

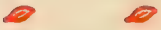
Last noon beheld them full of lusty life,
Last eve in Beauty's circle proudly gay,
The midnight brought the signal-sound of strife,
The morn the marshalling in arms,—the day
Battle's magnificently-stern array!
The thunder-clouds close o'er it, which when rent
The earth is cover'd thick with other clay,
Which her own clay shall cover, heap'd and pent,
Rider and horse,—friend, foe,—in one red burial blent!

Their praise is hymn'd by loftier harps than mine:
Yet one I would select from that proud throng,
Partly because they blend me with his line,
And partly that I did his sire some wrong,
And partly that bright names will hallow song;
And his was of the bravest, and when shower'd
The death-bolts deadliest the thinn'd files along,

Even where the thickest of war's tempest
lower'd,
They reach'd no nobler breast than thine,
young, gallant Howard!

There have been tears and breaking
hearts for thee,
And mine were nothing, had I such to
give;
But when I stood beneath the fresh green
tree,
Which living waves where thou didst
cease to live,
And saw around me the wide field re-
vive
With fruits and fertile promise, and the
Spring
Came forth her work of gladness to con-
trive,
With all her reckless birds upon the
wing,
I turn'd from all she brought to those she
could not bring.

Epitaph for William Pitt



With death doom'd to grapple,
Beneath this cold slab, he
Who lied in the Chapel
Now lies in the Abbey.

Vision of Belshazzar

The King was on his throne,
The Satraps throng'd the hall;
A thousand bright lamps shone
O'er that high festival.
A thousand cups of gold,
In Judah deem'd divine—
Jehovah's vessels hold
The godless Heathen's wine.

In that same hour and hall,
The fingers of a hand
Came forth against the wall,
And wrote as if on sand:
The fingers of a man;—
A solitary hand
Along the letters ran,
And traced them like a wand.

The monarch saw, and shook,
And bade no more rejoice;
All bloodless wax'd his look,
And tremulous his voice.

"Let the men of lore appear,
The wisest of the earth,
And expound the words of fear,
Which mar our royal mirth."

Chaldea's seers are good,
But here they have no skill;
And the unknown letters stood
Untold and awful still.
And Babel's men of age
Are wise and deep in lore,
But now they were not sage,
They saw—but knew no more.

A captive in the land,
A stranger and a youth,
He heard the king's command,
He saw that writing's truth,
The lamps around were bright,
The prophecy in view;
He read it on that night,—
The morrow proved it true.

"Belshazzar's grave is made,
His kingdom pass'd away,
He, in the balance weigh'd,
Is light and worthless clay,
The shroud his robe of state,
His canopy the stone:
The Mede is at his gate!
The Persian on his throne!"

Greece

FROM "THE GIAOUR"

Clime of the unforgotten brave!
Whose land from plain to mountain-cave
Was Freedom's home or Glory's grave!
Shrine of the mighty! can it be,
That this is all remains of thee?
Approach, thou craven crouching slave:
Say, is not this Thermopylæ?
These waters blue that round you lave,
Oh servile offspring of the free—
Pronounce what sea, what shore is this?
The gulf, the rock of Salamis!
These scenes, their story not unknown,
Arise, and make again your own;
Snatch from the ashes of your sires
The embers of their former fires;
And he who in the strife expires
Will add to theirs a name of fear
That Tyranny shall quake to hear,
And leave his sons a hope, a fame,
They too will rather die than shame:

GREECE

For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeath'd by bleeding Sire to Son,
Though baffled oft is ever won.
Bear witness, Greece, thy living page!
Attest it many a deathless age!
While kings, in dusty darkness hid,
Have left a nameless pyramid,
Thy heroes, though the general doom
Hath swept the column from their tomb,
A mightier monument command,
The mountains of their native land!
There points thy Muse to stranger's eye
The graves of those that cannot die!
'T were long to tell, and sad to trace,
Each step from splendour to disgrace;
Enough —no foreign foe could quell
Thy soul, till from itself it fell;
Yes! Self-abasement paved the way
To villain-bonds and despot sway.

The Prisoner of Chillon

Eternal Spirit of the chainless Mind!
Brightest in dungeons, Liberty! thou art,
For there thy habitation is the heart—
The heart which love of thee alone can bind;
And when thy sons to fetters are consign'd—
To fetters, and the damp vault's dayless gloom,
Their country conquers with their martyrdom,
And Freedom's fame finds wings on every wind.
Chillon! thy prison is a holy place,
And thy sad floor an altar—for 't was trod,
Until his very steps have left a trace
Worn, as if thy cold pavement were a sod,
By Bonnivard!—May none those marks efface!
For they appeal from tyranny to God.

THE PRISONER OF CHILLON

I

My hair is gray, but not with years,
Nor grew it white
In a single night,
As men's have grown from sudden fears:
My limbs are bow'd, though not with toil,
But rusted with a vile repose,
For they have been a dungeon's spoil,
And mine has been the fate of those
To whom the goodly earth and air
Are bann'd, and barr'd—forbidden fare;
But this was for my father's faith
I suffer'd chains and courted death;
That father perish'd at the stake
For tenets he would not forsake;
And for the same his lineal race
In darkness found a dwelling-place;
We were seven—who now are one,
Six in youth, and one in age,
Finish'd as they had begun,
Proud of persecution's rage;
One in fire, and two in field,
Their belief with blood have seal'd;
Dying as their father died,
For the God their foes denied;
Three were in a dungeon cast,
Of whom this wreck is left the last.

II

There are seven pillars of Gothic mould,
In Chillon's dungeons deep and old,
There are seven columns, massy and
gray,
Dim with a dull imprison'd ray,
A sunbeam which hath lost its way,
And through the crevice and the cleft
Of the thick wall is fallen and left;
Creeping o'er the floor so damp,
Like a marsh's meteor lamp:
And in each pillar there is a ring,
And in each ring there is a chain;
That iron is a cankering thing,
For in these limbs its teeth remain,
With marks that will not wear away,
Till I have done with this new day,
Which now is painful to these eyes,
Which have not seen the sun so rise
For years—I cannot count them o'er,
I lost their long and heavy score,
When my last brother droop'd and died,
And I lay living by his side.

III

They chain'd us each to a column stone,
And we were three—yet, each alone;
We could not move a single pace,
We could not see each other's face,

But with that pale and livid light
That made us strangers in our sight:
And thus together—yet apart,
Fetter'd in hand, but joined in heart,
'T was still some solace in the dearth
Of the pure elements of earth,
To hearken to each other's speech,
And each turn comforter to each
With some new hope, or legend old,
Or song heroically bold;
But even these at length grew cold.
Our voices took a dreary tone,
An echo of the dungeon stone,
A grating sound—not full and free
As they of yore were wont to be:
It might be fancy—but to me
They never sounded like our own.

IV

I was the eldest of the three,
And to uphold and cheer the rest
I ought to do—and did my best—
And each did well in his degree.
The youngest, whom my father loved,
Because our mother's brow was given
To him—with eyes as blue as heaven,
For him my soul was sorely moved:
And truly might it be distress'd
To see such bird in such a nest;

For he was beautiful as day—
(When day was beautiful to me
As to young eagles, being free)—
A polar day, which will not see
A sunset till its summer's gone,
Its sleepless summer of long light,
The snow-clad offspring of the sun:
And thus he was as pure and bright,
And in his natural spirit gay,
With tears for nought but others' ills,
And then they flow'd like mountain rills,
Unless he could assuage the woe
Which he abhorr'd to view below.

V

The other was as pure of mind,
But form'd to combat with his kind;
Strong in his frame, and of a mood
Which 'gainst the world in war had stood,
And perish'd in the foremost rank
With joy:—but not in chains to pine:
His spirit wither'd with their clank,
I saw it silently decline—
And so perchance in sooth did mine;
But yet I forced it on to cheer
Those relics of a home so dear.
He was a hunter of the hills,
Had follow'd there the deer and wolf;
To him this dungeon was a gulf,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.

VI

Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave enthralls:
A double dungeon wall and wave
Have made—and like a living grave
Below the surface of the lake
The dark vault lies wherein we lay,
We heard it ripple night and day;
Sounding o'er our heads it knock'd;
And I have felt the winter's spray
Wash through the bars when winds were high
And wanton in the happy sky;
And then the very rock hath rock'd,
And I have felt it shake, unshock'd,
Because I could have smiled to see
The death that would have set me free.

VII

I said my nearer brother pined,
I said his mighty heart declined,
He loathed and put away his food;
It was not that 't was coarse and rude,
For we were used to hunters' fare,
And for the like had little care:

The milk drawn from the mountain goat
Was changed for water from the moat,
Our bread was such as captive's tears
Have moisten'd many a thousand years,
Since man first pent his fellow men
Like brutes within an iron den;
But what were these to us or him?
These wasted not his heart or limb;
My brother's soul was of that mould
Which in a palace had grown cold,
Had his free-breathing been denied
The range of the steep mountain's side;
But why delay the truth?—he died.
I saw, and could not hold his head,
Nor reach his dying hand—nor dead,—
Though hard I strove, but strove in vain,
To rend and gnash my bonds in twain.
He died—and they unlock'd his chain,
And scoop'd for him a shallow grave
Even from the cold earth of our cave.
I begg'd them, as a boon, to lay
His corse in dust whereon the day
Might shine—it was a foolish thought,
But then within my brain it wrought,
That even in death his freeborn breast
In such a dungeon could not rest.
I might have spared my idle prayer—
They coldly laugh'd—and laid him there:
The flat and turfless earth above
The being we so much did love;

His empty chain above it leant,
Such murder's fitting monument!

VIII

But he, the favourite and the flower,
Most cherish'd since his natal hour,
His mother's image in fair face,
The infant love of all his race,
His martyr'd father's dearest thought,
My latest care, for whom I sought
To hoard my life, that his might be
Less wretched now, and one day free;
He, too, who yet had held untired
A spirit natural or inspired—
He, too, was struck, and day by day
Was wither'd on the stalk away.
Oh, God! it is a fearful thing
To see the human soul take wing
In any shape, in any mood:
I 've seen it rushing forth in blood,
I 've seen it on the breaking ocean
Strive with a swoln convulsive motion,
I 've seen the sick and ghastly bed
Of Sin delirious with its dread:
But these were horrors—this was woe
Unmix'd with such—but sure and slow:
He faded, and so calm and meek,
So softly worn, so sweetly weak,
So tearless, yet so tender—kind,
And grieved for those he left behind;

With all the while a cheek whose bloom
Was as a mockery of the tomb,
Whose tints as gently sunk away
As a departing rainbow's ray—
An eye of most transparent light,
That almost made the dungeon bright,
And not a word of murmur—not
A groan o'er his untimely lot,—
A little talk of better days,
A little hope my own to raise,
For I was sunk in silence—lost
In this last loss, of all the most;
And then the sighs he would suppress
Of fainting nature's feebleness,
More slowly drawn, grew less and less:
I listen'd, but I could not hear;
I call'd, for I was wild with fear;
I knew 'twas hopeless, but my dread
Would not be thus admonished;
I call'd, and thought I heard a sound—
I burst my chain with one strong bound,
And rush'd to him:—I found him not,
I only stirr'd in this black spot,
I only lived—*I* only drew
The accursed breath of dungeon-dew;
The last—the sole—the dearest link
Between me and the eternal brink,
Which bound me to my failing race,
Was broken in this fatal place.

One on the earth, and one beneath—
My brothers—both had ceased to breathe:
I took that hand which lay so still,
Alas! my own was full as chill;
I had not strength to stir, or strive,
But felt that I was still alive—
A frantic feeling, when we know
That what we love shall ne'er be so.
I know not why
I could not die,
I had no earthly hope but faith,
And that forbade a selfish death.

IX

What next befell me then and there
I know not well—I never knew—
First came the loss of light, and air,
And then of darkness too:
I had no thought, no feeling—none—
Among the stones I stood a stone,
And was, scarce conscious what I wist,
As shrubless crags within the mist;
For all was blank, and bleak, and gray,
It was not night—it was not day;
It was not even the dungeon-light,
So hateful to my heavy sight,
But vacancy absorbing space,
And fixedness—without a place;

There were no stars—no earth—no time—
No check — no change — no good — no crime—
But silence, and a stirless breath
Which neither was of life nor death;
A sea of stagnant idleness,
Blind, boundless, mute, and motionless!

X

A light broke in upon my brain,—
It was the carol of a bird;
It ceased, and then it came again,
The sweetest song ear ever heard,
And mine was thankful till my eyes
Ran over with the glad surprise,
And they that moment could not see
I was the mate of misery;
But then by dull degrees came back
My senses to their wonted track;
I saw the dungeon walls and floor
Close slowly round me as before,
I saw the glimmer of the sun
Creeping as it before had done,
But through the crevice where it came
That bird was perch'd, as fond and tame,
And tamer than upon the tree;
A lovely bird, with azure wings,
And song that said a thousand things,
And seem'd to say them all for me!

I never saw its like before,
I ne'er shall see its likeness more:
It seem'd like me to want a mate,
But was not half so desolate,
And it was come to love me when
None lived to love me so again,
And cheering from my dungeon's brink,
Had brought me back to feel and think.
I know not if it late were free,
  Or broke its cage to perch on mine,
But knowing well captivity,
  Sweet bird! I could not wish for thine!
Or if it were, in winged guise,
A visitant from Paradise;
For—Heaven forgive that thought! the
    while
Which made me both to weep and smile;
I sometimes deem'd that it might be
My brother's soul come down to me;
But then at last away it flew,
And then 't was mortal well I knew,
For he would never thus have flown,
And left me twice so doubly lone, –
Lone—as the corse within its shroud,
Lone—as a solitary cloud,
  A single cloud on a sunny day,
While all the rest of heaven is clear,
A frown upon the atmosphere,
That hath no business to appear
  When skies are blue, and earth is gay.

XI

A kind of change came in my fate,
My keepers grew compassionate;
I know not what had made them so,
They were inured to sights of woe,
But so it was:—my broken chain
With links unfasten'd did remain,
And it was liberty to stride
Along my cell from side to side,
And up and down, and then athwart,
And tread it over every part;
And round the pillars one by one,
Returning where my walk begun,
Avoiding only, as I trod,
My brothers' graves without a sod;
For if I thought with heedless tread
My step profaned their lowly bed,
My breath came gaspingly and thick,
And my crush'd heart fell blind and sick.

XII

I made a footing in the wall,
It was not therefrom to escape,
For I had buried one and all
Who loved me in a human shape;
And the whole earth would henceforth be
A wider prison unto me:
No child—no sire—no kin had I,
No partner in my misery;

I thought of this, and I was glad,
For thought of them had made me mad;
But I was curious to ascend
To my barr'd windows, and to bend
Once more, upon the mountains high,
The quiet of a loving eye.

XIII

I saw them—and they were the same,
They were not changed like me in frame;
I saw their thousand years of snow
On high—their wide long lake below,
And the blue Rhone in fullest flow;
I heard the torrents leap and gush
O'er channell'd rock and broken bush;
I saw the white-wall'd distant town,
And whiter sails go skimming down;
And then there was a little isle,
Which in my very face did smile,
The only one in view;
A small green isle, it seem'd no more,
Scarce broader than my dungeon floor,
But in it there were three tall trees,
And o'er it blew the mountain breeze,
And by it there were waters flowing,
And on it there were young flowers growing,
Of gentle breath and hue.
The fish swam by the castle wall,
And they seem'd joyous each and all;

The eagle rode the rising blast,
Methought he never flew so fast
As then to me he seem'd to fly,
And then new tears came in my eye,
And I felt troubled—and would fain
I had not left my recent chain;
And when I did descend again,
The darkness of my dim abode
Fell on me as a heavy load;
It was as is a new-dug grave,
Closing o'er one we sought to save,—
And yet my glance, too much oppress'd,
Had almost need of such a rest.

XIV

It might be months, or years, or days,
I kept no count—I took no note,
I had no hope my eyes to raise,
And clear them of their dreary mote;
At last men came to set me free,
I ask'd not why, and reck'd not where,
It was at length the same to me,
Fetter'd or fetterless to be,
I learn'd to love despair.
And thus when they appear'd at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage—and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home:

With spiders I had friendship made,
And watch'd them in their sullen trade,
Had seen the mice by moonlight play,
And why should I feel less than they?
We were all inmates of one place,
And I, the monarch of each race,
Had power to kill—yet, strange to tell!
In quiet we had learn'd to dwell;
My very chains and I grew friends,
So much a long communion tends
To make us what we are:—even I
Regain'd my freedom with a sigh.

The Coliseum

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

And here the buzz of eager nations ran,
In murmur'd pity, or loud-roar'd applause,
As man was slaughter'd by his fellow-man.
And wherefore slaughter'd? wherefore, but because
Such were the bloody Circus' genial laws,
And the imperial pleasure. — Wherefore not?
What matters where we fall to fill the maws
Of worms — on battle-plains or listed spot?
Both are but theatres where the chief actors rot.

I see before me the Gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand—his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his droop'd head sinks gradually low—

And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder-shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hail'd the wretch who won.

He heard it, but he heeded not—his eyes
Were with his heart, and that was far away;
He reck'd not of the life he lost nor prize,
But where his rude hut by the Danube lay,
There were his young barbarians all at play,
There was their Dacian mother — he, their sire,
Butcher'd to make a Roman holiday—
All this rush'd with his blood—Shall he expire
And unavenged?—Arise! ye Goths, and glut your ire!

The Dogs' Carnival

FROM "THE SIEGE OF CORINTH"

He wander'd on along the beach,
Till within the range of a carbine's reach
Of the leaguer'd wall; but they saw him not,
Or how could he 'scape from the hostile shot?
Did traitors lurk in the Christians' hold?
Were their hands grown stiff, or their hearts wax'd cold?
I know not, in sooth; but from yonder wall
There flash'd no fire, and there hiss'd no ball,
Though he stood beneath the bastion's frown,
That flank'd the sea-ward gate of the town;
Though he heard the sound, and could almost tell
The sullen words of the sentinel,

As his measured step on the stone below
Clank'd, as he paced it to and fro;
And he saw the lean dogs beneath the wall
Hold o'er the dead their carnival,
Gorging and growling o'er carcass and limb;
They were too busy to bark at him!
From a Tartar's skull they had stripp'd the flesh,
As ye peel the fig when its fruit is fresh;
And their white tusks crunch'd over the whiter skull,
As it slipped through their jaws, when their edge grew dull,
As they lazily mumbled the bones of the dead,
When they scarce could rise from the spot where they fed;
So well had they broken a lingering fast
With those who had fallen for that night's repast.
And Alp knew, by the turbans that roll'd on the sand,
The foremost of these were the best of his band:
Crimson and green were the shawls of their wear,
And each scalp had a single long tuft of hair,
All the rest was shaven and bare.

The scalps were in the wild dog's maw,
The hair was tangled round his jaw:
But close by the shore, on the edge of the gulf,
There sat a vulture flapping a wolf,
Who had stolen from the hills, but kept away,
Scared by the dogs, from the human prey;
But he seized on his share of a steed that lay,
Pick'd by the birds, on the sands of the bay.

Mazeppa's Ride

FROM "MAZEPPA"

"The wood was pass'd; 't was more than noon,
But chill the air, although in June;
Or it might be my veins ran cold—
Prolong'd endurance tames the bold;
And I was then not what I seem,
But headlong as a wintry stream,
And wore my feelings out before
I well could count their causes o'er:
And what with fury, fear, and wrath,
The tortures which beset my path,
Cold, hunger, sorrow, shame, distress,
Thus bound in nature's nakedness;
Sprung from a race whose rising blood
When stirr'd beyond its calmer mood,
And trodden hard upon, is like
The rattle-snake's, in act to strike,
What marvel if this worn-out trunk
Beneath its woes a moment sunk?

The earth gave way, the skies roll'd
round,
I seem'd to sink upon the ground;
But err'd, for I was fastly bound.
My heart turn'd sick, my brain grew
sore,
And throbb'd awhile, then beat no more:
The skies spun like a mighty wheel;
I saw the trees like drunkards reel,
And a slight flash sprang o'er my eyes,
Which saw no farther: he who dies
Can die no more than then I died.
O'ertortured by that ghastly ride,
I felt the blackness come and go,
And strove to wake; but could not
make
My senses climb up from below:
I felt as on a plank at sea,
When all the waves that dash o'er thee,
At the same time upheave and whelm,
And hurl thee towards a desert realm.
My undulating life was as
The fancied lights that flitting pass
Our shut eyes in deep midnight, when
Fever begins upon the brain.

. . . . . .

"Up rose the sun; the mists were curl'd
Back from the solitary world
Which lay around—behind—before.
What booted it to traverse o'er

Plain, forest, river? Man nor brute,
Nor dint of hoof, nor print of foot,
Lay in the wild luxuriant soil;
No sign of travel—none of toil;
The very air was mute;
And not an insect's shrill small horn,
Nor matin bird's new voice was borne
From herb nor thicket. Many a werst,
Panting as if his heart would burst,
The weary brute still stagger'd on;
And still we were—or seem'd—alone.
At length, while reeling on our way,
Methought I heard a courser neigh,
From out yon tuft of blackening firs.
Is it the wind whose branches stirs?
No, no! from out the forest prance
A trampling troop; I see them come!
In one vast squadron they advance!
I strove to cry—my lips were dumb.
The steeds rush on in plunging pride;
But where are they the reins to guide?
A thousand horse—and none to ride!
With flowing tail, and flying mane,
Wide nostrils—never stretch'd by pain,
Mouths bloodless to the bit or rein,
And feet that iron never shod,
And flanks unscarr'd by spur or rod,
A thousand horse, the wild, the free,
Like waves that follow o'er the sea,
Came quickly thundering on,

As if our faint approach to meet;
The sight re-nerved my courser's feet,
A moment staggering, feebly fleet,
A moment, with a faint low neigh,
He answer'd, and then fell;
With gasps and glazing eyes he lay,
And reeking limbs immoveable,
His first and last career is done!
On come the troop—they saw him stoop,
They saw me strangely bound along
His back with many a bloody thong:
They stop—they start—they snuff the air,
Gallop a moment here and there,
Approach, retire, wheel round and round,
Then plunging back with sudden bound,
Headed by one black mighty steed,
Who seem'd the patriarch of his breed,
Without a single speck or hair
Of white upon his shaggy hide;
They snort—they foam—neigh—swerve aside,
And backward to the forest fly,
By instinct, from a human eye.

. . . . . .

"The sun was sinking—still I lay
Chain'd to the chill and stiffening steed;
I thought to mingle there our clay,
And my dim eyes of death had need,
No hope arose of being freed:

I cast my last looks up the sky,
And there between me and the sun
I saw the expecting raven fly,
Who scarce would wait till both should die,
Ere his repast begun;
He flew, and perch'd, then flew once more,
And each time nearer than before;
I saw his wing through twilight flit,
And once so near me he alit
I could have smote, but lack'd the strength;
But the slight motion of my hand,
And feeble scratching of the sand,
The exerted throat's faint struggling noise,
Which scarcely could be call'd a voice,
Together scared him off at length.
I know no more—my latest dream
Is something of a lovely star
Which fix'd my dull eyes from afar,
And went and came with wandering beam,
And of the cold, dull, swimming, dense
Sensation of recurring sense,
And then subsiding back to death,
And then again a little breath,
A little thrill, a short suspense,
An icy sickness curdling o'er
My heart, and sparks that cross'd my brain—
A gasp, a throb, a start of pain,
A sigh, and nothing more.

The Falls of Terni

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

The roar of waters!—from the headlong height
Velino cleaves the wave-worn precipice;
The fall of waters! rapid as the light
The flashing mass foams shaking the abyss;
The hell of waters! where they howl and hiss,
And boil in endless torture; while the sweat
Of their great agony, wrung out from this
Their Phlegethon, curls round the rocks of jet
That gird the gulf around, in pitiless horror set,

And mounts in spray the skies, and thence again
Returns in an unceasing shower, which round,

With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
Is an eternal April to the ground,
Making it all one emerald:—how profound
The gulf! and how the giant element
From rock to rock leaps with delirious bound,
Crushing the cliffs, which, downward worn and rent
With his fierce footsteps, yield in chasms a fearful vent

To the broad column which rolls on, and shows
More like the fountain of an infant sea
Torn from the womb of mountains by the throes
Of a new world, than only thus to be
Parent of rivers, which flow gushingly,
With many windings, through the vale:—Look back!
Lo! where it comes like an eternity,
As if to sweep down all things in its track,
Charming the eye with dread,—a matchless cataract,

Horribly beautiful! but on the verge,
From side to side, beneath the glittering morn,

An Iris sits, amidst the infernal surge,
Like Hope upon a death-bed, and, unworn
Its steady dyes, while all around is torn
By the distracted waters, bears serene
Its brilliant hues with all their beams unshorn:
Resembling, 'mid the torture of the scene,
Love watching Madness with unalterable mien.

An August Evening on the Brenta

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

The moon is up, and yet it is not night—
Sunset divides the sky with her—a sea
Of glory streams along the Alpine height
Of blue Friuli's mountains; Heaven is free
From clouds, but of all colours seems to be,—
Melted to one vast Iris of the West,—
Where the Day joins the past Eternity;
While, on the other hand, meek Dian's crest
Floats through the azure air—an island of the blest!

A single star is at her side, and reigns
With her o'er half the lovely heaven; but still

AN AUGUST EVENING

Yon sunny sea heaves brightly, and remains
Roll'd o'er the peak of the far Rhætian hill,
As Day and Night contending were, until
Nature reclaim'd her order:—gently flows
The deep-dyed Brenta, where their hues instil
The odorous purple of a new-born rose,
Which streams upon her stream, and glass'd within it glows,

Fill'd with the face of heaven, which, from afar,
Comes down upon its waters; all its hues,
From the rich sunset to the rising star,
Their magical variety diffuse:
And now they change; a paler shadow strews
Its mantle o'er the mountains; parting day
Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, till—'t is gone—and all is gray.

Venice

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

I stood in Venice, on the Bridge of Sighs;
A palace and a prison on each hand:
I saw from out the waves her structures rise
As from the stroke of the enchanter's wand:
A thousand years their cloudy wings expand
Around me, and a dying Glory smiles
O'er the far times, when many a subject land
Look'd to the winged Lion's marble piles,
Where Venice sate in state, throned on her hundred isles!

She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
Rising with her tiara of proud towers
At airy distance, with majestic motion,
A ruler of the waters and their powers:

And such she was;—her daughters had
their dowers
From spoils of nations, and the exhaust-
less East
Pour'd in her lap all gems in sparkling
showers.
In purple was she robed, and of her
feast
Monarchs partook, and deem'd their dig-
nity increased.

In Venice Tasso's echoes are no more,
And silent rows the songless gondolier;
Her palaces are crumbling to the shore,
And music meets not always now the ear:
Those days are gone—but Beauty still
is here.
States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth
not die,
Nor yet forget how Venice once was
dear,
The pleasant place of all festivity,
The revel of the earth, the masque of
Italy!

. . . . . .

The spouseless Adriatic mourns her lord;
And, annual marriage now no more
renew'd,
The Bucentaur lies rotting unrestored,
Neglected garment of her widowhood!

St. Mark yet sees his lion where he stood
Stand, but in mockery of his wither'd power,
Over the proud Place where an Emperor sued,
And monarchs gazed and envied in the hour
When Venice was a queen with an unequall'd dower.

. . . . . .

Statues of glass—all shiver'd—the long file
Of her dead Doges are declined to dust;
But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile
Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust;
Their sceptre broken, and their sword in rust,
Have yielded to the stranger: empty halls,
Thin streets, and foreign aspects, such as must
Too oft remind her who and what enthrals,
Have flung a desolate cloud o'er Venice' lovely walls.

. . . . . .

I loved her from my boyhood; she to me
Was as a fairy city of the heart,
Rising like water-columns from the sea,
Of joy the sojourn, and of wealth the mart;
And Otway, Radcliffe, Schiller, Shakspeare's art,
Had stamp'd her image in me, and even so,
Although I found her thus, we did not part,
Perchance even dearer in her day of woe,
Than when she was a boast, a marvel and a show.

Rome

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

Oh Rome! my country! city of the soul!
The orphans of the heart must turn to thee,
Lone mother of dead empires! and control
In their shut breasts their petty misery.
What are our woes and sufferance? Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, Ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay.

The Niobe of nations! there she stands,
Childless and crownless, in her voiceless woe;

An empty urn within her wither'd hands,
Whose holy dust was scatter'd long ago;
The Scipios' tomb contains no ashes now;
The very sepulchres lie tenantless
Of their heroic dwellers: dost thou flow,
Old Tiber! through a marble wilderness?
Rise, with thy yellow waves, and mantle her distress.

The Goth, the Christian, Time, War, Flood, and Fire,
Have dealt upon the seven-hill'd city's pride;
She saw her glories star by star expire,
And up the steep barbarian monarchs ride,
Where the car climb'd the Capitol; far and wide
Temple and tower went down, nor left a site:
Chaos of ruins! who shall trace the void,
O'er the dim fragments cast a lunar light,
And say, "Here was, or is", where all is doubly night?

The double night of ages, and of her,
Night's daughter, Ignorance, hath wrapt, and wrap
All round us; we but feel our way to err:
The ocean hath its chart, the stars their map,
And Knowledge spreads them on her ample lap;
But Rome is as the desert, where we steer
Stumbling o'er recollections; now we clap
Our hands, and cry "Eureka"! it is clear—
When but some false mirage of ruin rises near.

. . . . . .

Cypress and ivy, weed and wallflower grown
Matted and mass'd together, hillocks heap'd
On what were chambers, arch crush'd, column strown
In fragments, choked-up vaults, and frescoes steep'd
In subterranean damps, where the owl peep'd,
Deeming it midnight:—Temples, baths, or halls?
Pronounce who can; for all that Learning reap'd

From her research hath been, that these
are walls—
Behold the Imperial Mount! 'tis thus the
mighty falls.

There is the moral of all human tales;
'T is but the same rehearsal of the past,
First Freedom, and then Glory—when
that fails,
Wealth, vice, corruption,—barbarism at
last.
And History, with all her volumes vast,
Hath but *one* page,—'t is better written
here
Where gorgeous Tyranny hath thus
amass'd
All treasures, all delights, that eye or
ear,
Heart, soul could seek, tongue ask—Away
with words! draw near,

Admire, exult—despise—laugh, weep,—
for here
There is such matter for all feeling:—
Man!
Thou pendulum betwixt a smile and
tear,
Ages and realms are crowded in this
span,

This mountain, whose obliterated plan
The pyramid of empires pinnacled,
Of Glory's gewgaws shining in the van
Till the sun's rays with added flame were fill'd!
Where are its golden roofs? where those who dared to build?

Tully was not so eloquent as thou,
Thou nameless column with the buried base!
What are the laurels of the Cæsar's brow?
Crown me with ivy from his dwelling-place.
Whose arch or pillar meets me in the face,
Titus' or Trajan's? No—'tis that of Time:
Triumph, arch, pillar, all he doth displace
Scoffing; and apostolic statues climb
To crush the imperial urn, whose ashes slept sublime.

Nature and Solitude

FROM "CHILDE HAROLD"

To sit on rocks, to muse o'er flood and
fell,
To slowly trace the forest's shady scene,
Where things that own not man's
dominion dwell,
And mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely
been;
To climb the trackless mountain all
unseen,
With the wild flock that never needs a
fold;
Alone o'er steeps and foaming falls to
lean;
This is not solitude; 't is but to hold
Converse with Nature's charms, and view
her stores unroll'd.

But 'midst the crowd, the hum, the
shock of men,
To hear, to see, to feel, and to possess,

And roam along, the world's tired denizen,
With none who bless us, none whom we can bless;
Minions of splendour shrinking from distress!
None that, with kindred consciousness endued,
If we were not, would seem to smile the less,
Of all that flatter'd, follow'd, sought, and sued;
This is to be alone; this, this is solitude!

. . . . . .

I live not in myself, but I become
Portion of that around me; and to me
High mountains are a feeling, but the hum
Of human cities torture: I can see
Nothing to loathe in nature, save to be
A link reluctant in a fleshly chain,
Class'd among creatures, when the soul can flee,
And with the sky, the peak, the heaving plain
Of ocean, or the stars, mingle, and not in vain.

And thus I am absorb'd, and this is life:
I look upon the peopled desert past.

As on a place of agony and strife,
Where, for some sin, to sorrow I was cast,
To act and suffer, but remount at last
With a fresh pinion; which I feel to spring,
Though young, yet waxing vigorous, as the blast
Which it would cope with, on delighted wing,
Spurning the clay-cold bonds which round our being cling.

And when, at length, the mind shall be all free
From what it hates in this degraded form,
Reft of its carnal life, save what shall be
Existent happier in the fly and worm,—
When elements to elements conform,
And dust is as it should be, shall I not
Feel all I see, less dazzling, but more warm?
The bodiless thought? the Spirit of each spot?
Of which, even now, I share at times the immortal lot?

. . . . . .

Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye!
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul

To make these felt and feeling, well
may be
Things that have made me watchful;
the far roll
Of your departing voices, is the knoll
Of what in me is sleepless,—if I rest.
But where of ye, O tempests! is the
goal?
Are ye like those within the human
breast?
Or do ye find, at length, like eagles, some
high nest?

Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me,—could
I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus
throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings,
strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all
I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into
one word,
And that one word were Lightning, I
would speak;
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing
it as a sword.

Lines

ON HEARING THAT
LADY BYRON
WAS ILL

And thou wert sad—yet I was not with thee;
And thou wert sick, and yet I was not near;
Methought that joy and health alone could be
Where I was *not*—and pain and sorrow here!
And is it thus?—it is as I foretold,
And shall be more so; for the mind recoils
Upon itself, and the wreck'd heart lies cold,
While heaviness collects the shatter'd spoils.
It is not in the storm nor in the strife
We feel benumb'd, and wish to be no more,
But in the after-silence on the shore,
When all is lost, except a little life.

I am too well avenged!—but 't was my right;
Whate'er my sins might be, *thou* wert not sent
To be the Nemesis who should requite—
Nor did Heaven choose so near an instrument.
Mercy is for the merciful!—if thou
Hast been of such, 't will be accorded now.
Thy nights are banish'd from the realms of sleep!—
Yes! they may flatter thee, but thou shalt feel
A hollow agony which will not heal,
For thou art pillow'd on a curse too deep;
Thou hast sown in my sorrow, and must reap
The bitter harvest in a woe as real!
I have had many foes, but none like thee;
For 'gainst the rest myself I could defend,
And be avenged, or turn them into friend;
But thou in safe implacability
Hadst nought to dread—in thy own weakness shielded,
And in my love, which hath but too much yielded,

And spared, for thy sake, some I should not spare;
And thus upon the world—trust in thy truth,
And the wild fame of my ungovern'd youth—
On things that were not, and on things that are—
Even upon such a basis hast thou built
A monument, whose cement hath been guilt!
The moral Clytemnestra of thy lord,
And hew'd down, with an unsuspected sword,
Fame, peace, and hope—and all the better life
Which, but for this cold treason of thy heart,
Might still have risen from out the grave of strife,
And found a nobler duty than to part.
But of thy virtues didst thou make a vice,
Trafficking with them in a purpose cold,
For present anger, and for future gold—
And buying other's grief at any price.
And thus once enter'd into crooked ways,
The early truth, which was thy proper praise,

LINES

Did not still walk beside thee—but at
times,
And with a breast unknowing its own
crimes,
Deceit, averments incompatible,
Equivocations, and the thoughts which
dwell
In Janus-spirits—the significant eye
Which learns to lie with silence—the pre-
text
Of prudence, with advantages annex'd—
The acquiescence in all things which tend,
No matter how, to the desired end—
All found a place in thy philosophy.
The means were worthy, and the end is
won—
I would not do by thee as thou hast done!

Stanzas

Could Love for ever
Run like a river,
And Time's endeavour
Be tried in vain—
No other pleasure
With this could measure;
And like a treasure
We'd hug the chain.
But since our sighing
Ends not in dying,
And, form'd for flying,
Love plumes his wing;
Then for this reason
Let's love a season;
But let that season be only Spring.

When lovers parted
Feel broken-hearted,
And, all hopes thwarted,
Expect to die;
A few years older,
Ah! how much colder
They might behold her
For whom they sigh!

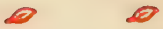
When link'd together,
In every weather,
They pluck Love's feather
From out his wing—
He 'll stay for ever,
But sadly shiver
Without his plumage, when past the Spring.

Stanzas for Music

Bright be the place of thy soul!
No lovelier spirit than thine
E'er burst from its mortal control,
In the orbs of the blessed to shine.
On earth thou wert all but divine,
As thy soul shall immortally be;
And our sorrow may cease to repine
When we know that thy God is with thee.

Light be the turf of thy tomb!
May its verdure like emeralds be!
There should not be the shadow of gloom
In aught that reminds us of thee.
Young flowers and an evergreen tree
May spring from the spot of thy rest:
But nor cypress nor yew let us see;
For why should we mourn for the blest?

She Walks In Beauty



She walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies;
And all that 's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes:
Thus mellow'd to that tender light
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less,
Had half impair'd the nameless grace,
Which waves in every raven tress,
Or softly lightens o'er her face;
Where thoughts serenely sweet express,
How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek, and o'er that brow,
So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,
The smiles that win, the tints that glow,
But tell of days in goodness spent,
A mind at peace with all below,
A heart whose love is innocent!

When we Two Parted

When we two parted
In silence and tears,
Half broken-hearted
To sever for years,
Pale grew thy cheek and cold,
Colder thy kiss;
Truly that hour foretold
Sorrow to this.

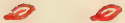
The dew of the morning
Sank chill on my brow—
It felt like the warning
Of what I feel now.
Thy vows are all broken,
And light is thy fame;
I hear thy name spoken,
And share in its shame.

They name thee before me,
A knell to mine ear;
A shudder comes o'er me—
Why wert thou so dear?

They know not I knew thee,
  Who knew thee too well:—
Long, long shall I rue thee,
  Too deeply to tell.

In secret we met—
  In silence I grieve,
That thy heart could forget,
  Thy spirit deceive.
If I should meet thee
  After long years,
How should I greet thee?—
  With silence and tears.

Oh, Snatch'd Away In Beauty's Bloom



Oh! snatch'd away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom:

And oft by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturb'd the dead!

Away! we know that tears are vain,
That death nor heeds nor hears distress:
Will this unteach us to complain?
Or make one mourner weep the less?
And thou—who tell'st me to forget,
Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

Euthanasia

When Time, or soon or late, shall bring
The dreamless sleep that lulls the dead,
Oblivion! may thy languid wing
Wave gently o'er my dying bed!

No band of friends or heirs be there,
To weep, or wish, the coming blow:
No maiden, with dishevell'd hair,
To feel, or feign, decorous woe,

But silent let me sink to earth,
With no officious mourners near:
I would not mar one hour of mirth,
Nor startle friendship with a tear.

Yet Love, if Love in such an hour
Could nobly check its useless sighs,
Might then exert its latest power
In her who lives and him who dies.

'T were sweet, my Psyche, to the last
Thy features still serene to see:
Forgetful of its struggles past,
E'en Pain itself should smile on thee.

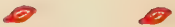
But vain the wish—for Beauty still
Will shrink, as shrinks the ebbing breath;
And women's tears, produced at will,
Deceive in life, unman in death.

Then lonely be my latest hour,
Without regret, without a groan;
For thousands Death hath ceased to lower,
And pain been transient or unknown.

"Ay, but to die, and go", alas!
Where all have gone, and all must go!
To be the nothing that I was
Ere born to life and living woe!

Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
And know, whatever thou hast been,
'T is something better not to be.

And Thou art Dead, as Young and Fair



And thou art dead, as young and fair
  As aught of mortal birth;
And form so soft, and charms so rare,
  Too soon return'd to Earth!
Though Earth received them in her bed,
And o'er the spot the crowd may tread
  In carelessness or mirth,
There is an eye which could not brook
A moment on that grave to look.

I will not ask where thou liest low,
  Nor gaze upon the spot;
There flowers or weeds at will may grow,
  So I behold them not:
It is enough for me to prove
That what I loved, and long must love,
  Like common earth can rot;
To me there needs no stone to tell,
'T is Nothing that I loved so well.

Yet did I love thee to the last
As fervently as thou,
Who didst not change through all the past,
And canst not alter now.
The love where Death has set his seal,
Nor age can chill, nor rival steal,
Nor falsehood disavow:
And, what were worse, thou canst not see
Or wrong, or change, or fault in me.

The better days of life were ours;
The worst can be but mine:
The sun that cheers, the storm that lowers,
Shall never more be thine.
The silence of that dreamless sleep
I envy now too much to weep;
Nor need I to repine
That all those charms have pass'd away;
I might have watch'd through long decay.

The flower in ripen'd bloom unmatch'd
Must fall the earliest prey;
Though by no hand untimely snatch'd,
The leaves must drop away:
And yet it were a greater grief
To watch it withering, leaf by leaf,
Than see it pluck'd to-day;
Since earthly eye but ill can bear
To trace the change to foul from fair.

AND THOU ART DEAD

I know not if I could have borne
To see thy beauties fade;
The night that follow'd such a morn
Had worn a deeper shade:
Thy day without a cloud hath pass'd,
And thou wert lovely to the last;
Extinguish'd, not decay'd;
As stars that shoot along the sky
Shine brightest as they fall from high.

At once I wept, if I could weep,
My tears might well be shed,
To think I was not near to keep
One vigil o'er thy bed;
To gaze, how fondly! on thy face,
To fold thee in a faint embrace,
Uphold thy drooping head;
And show that love, however vain,
Nor thou nor I can feel again.

Yet how much less it were to gain,
Though thou hast left me free,
The loveliest things that still remain,
Than thus remember thee!
The all of thine that cannot die
Through dark and dread Eternity
Returns again to me.
And more thy buried love endears
Than aught, except its living years.

Stanzas Written on the Road between Florence and Pisa

Oh, talk not to me of a name great in story;
The days of our youth are the days of our glory;
And the myrtle and ivy of sweet two-and-twenty
Are worth all your laurels, though ever so plenty.

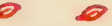
What are garlands and crowns to the brow that is wrinkled?
'T is but as a dead-flower with May-dew besprinkled.
Then away with all such from the head that is hoary!
What care I for the wreaths that can *only* give glory?

Oh Fame!—if I e'er took delight in thy praises,
'T was less for the sake of thy high-sounding phrases,

Than to see the bright eyes of the dear
one discover
She thought that I was not unworthy to
love her.

There chiefly I sought thee, *there* only
I found thee;
Her glance was the best of the rays that
surround thee;
When it sparkled o'er aught that was
bright in my story,
I knew it was love, and I felt it was
glory.

To Thomas Moore



My boat is on the shore,
And my bark is on the sea.
But, before I go, Tom Moore,
Here's a double health to thee

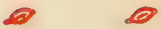
Here's a sigh to those who love me,
And a smile to those who hate;
And, whatever sky's above me,
Here's a heart for every fate.

Though the ocean roar around me,
Yet it still shall bear me on;
Though a desert should surround me,
It hath springs that may be won.

Were't the last drop in the well,
As I gasp'd upon the brink,
Ere my fainting spirit fell,
'Tis to thee that I would drink.

With that water, as this wine,
The libation I would pour
Should be—peace with thine and mine,
And a health to thee, Tom Moore.

So, We'll go No More A Roving



So, we'll go no more a roving
  So late into the night,
Though the heart be still as loving,
  And the moon be still as bright.

For the sword outwears its sheath,
  And the soul wears out the breast,
And the heart must pause to breathe,
  And love itself have rest.

Though the night was made for loving,
  And the day returns too soon,
Yet we'll go no more a roving
  By the light of the moon.

Italy and England

FROM "BEPPO"

With all its sinful doings, I must say,
That Italy 's a pleasant place to me,
Who love to see the Sun shine every day,
And vines (not nail'd to walls) from tree to tree
Festoon'd, much like the back scene of a play,
Or melodrame, which people flock to see,
When the first act is ended by a dance
In vineyards copied from the south of France.

I like on Autumn evenings to ride out,
Without being forced to bid my groom be sure
My cloak is round his middle strapp'd about,
Because the skies are not the most secure;

I know too that, if stopp'd upon my route,
Where the green alleys windingly allure,
Reeling with grapes red waggons choke the way,—
In England 't would be dung, dust, or a dray.

I also like to dine on becaficas,
To see the Sun set, sure he 'll rise to-morrow,
Not through a misty morning twinkling weak as
A drunken man's dead eye in maudlin sorrow,
But with all Heaven t' himself; that day will break as
Beauteous as cloudless, nor be forced to borrow
That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers
Where reeking London's smoky caldron simmers.

I love the language, that soft bastard Latin,
Which melts like kisses from a female mouth,

And sounds as if it should be writ on satin,
With syllables which breathe of the sweet South,
And gentle liquids gliding all so pat in,
That not a single accent seems uncouth,
Like our harsh northern whistling, grunting guttural,
Which we're obliged to hiss, and spit, and sputter all.

I like the women too (forgive my folly),
From the rich peasant-cheek of ruddy bronze,
And large black eyes that flash on you a volley
Of rays that say a thousand things at once,
To the high dama's brow, more melancholy,
But clear, and with a wild and liquid glance,
Heart on her lips, and soul within her eyes,
Soft as her clime, and sunny as her skies.

Eve of the land which still is Paradise!
Italian beauty! didst thou not inspire

Raphael, who died in thy embrace, and vies
With all we know of Heaven, or can desire,
In what he hath bequeath'd us?—in what guise,
Though flashing from the fervour of the lyre,
Would *words* describe thy past and present glow,
While yet Canova can create below?

"England! with all thy faults I love thee still,"
I said at Calais, and have not forgot it;
I like to speak and lucubrate my fill;
I like the government (but that is not it);
I like the freedom of the press and quill;
I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've got it);
I like a parliamentary debate,
Particularly when 't is not too late;

I like the taxes, when they're not too many;
I like a seacoal fire, when not too dear;
I like a beef-steak, too, as well as any;
Have no objection to a pot of beer;

I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
That is, I like two months of every year.
And so God save the Regent, Church, and King!
Which means that I like all and everything.

Our standing army, and disbanded seamen,
Poor's rate, Reform, my own, the nation's debt,
Our little riots just to show we are free men,
Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,
Our cloudy climate, and our chilly women,
All these I can forgive, and those forget,
And greatly venerate our recent glories,
And wish they were not owing to the Tories.

But to my tale of Laura,—for I find
Digression is a sin, that by degrees
Becomes exceeding tedious to my mind,
And, therefore, may the reader too displease—
The gentle reader, who may wax unkind,
And caring little for the author's ease,
Insist on knowing what he means, a hard
And hapless situation for a bard.

Oh that I had the art of easy writing
What should be easy reading! could I scale
Parnassus, where the Muses sit inditing
Those pretty poems never known to fail,
How quickly would I print (the world delighting)
A Grecian, Syrian, or Assyrian tale;
And sell you, mix'd with western sentimentalism,
Some samples of the finest Orientalism.

But I am but a nameless sort of person
(A broken Dandy lately on my travels),
And take for rhyme, to hook my rambling verse on,
The first that Walker's Lexicon unravels,
And when I can't find that, I put a worse on,
Not caring as I ought for critics' cavils;
I've half a mind to tumble down to prose,
But verse is more in fashion—so here goes.

Epistle from Mr. Murray to Dr. Polidori

Dear Doctor, I have read your play
Which is a good one in its way,—
Purges the eyes and moves the bowels,
And drenches handkerchiefs like towels
With tears, that, in a flux of grief,
Afford hysterical relief
To shatter'd nerves and quicken'd pulses,
Which your catastrophe convulses.

I like your moral and machinery;
Your plot, too, has such scope for scenery;
Your dialogue is apt and smart;
The play's concoction full of art;
Your hero raves, your heroine cries,
All stab, and every body dies.
In short, your tragedy would be
The very thing to hear and see:
And for a piece of publication,
If I decline on this occasion,
It is not that I am not sensible
To merits in themselves ostensible,

But—and I grieve to speak it—plays
Are drugs—mere drugs, sir,—now-a-days.
I had a heavy loss by "Manuel",—
Too lucky if it prove not annual,—
And Sotheby, with his "Orestes"
(Which, by the by, the author's best is),
Has lain so very long on hand,
That I despair of all demand.
I've advertised, but see my books,
Or only watch my shopman's looks;—
Still Ivan, Ina, and such lumber,
My back-shop glut, my shelves encumber.

There's Byron too, who once did better,
Has sent me, folded in a letter,
A sort of—it's no more a drama
Than Darnley, Ivan, or Kehama:
So alter'd since last year his pen is,
I think he's lost his wits at Venice.
In short, sir, what with one and t'other,
I dare not venture on another.
I write in haste; excuse each blunder;
The coaches through the streets so thunder!
My room's so full—we've Gifford here
Reading MS., with Hookham Frere,
Pronouncing on the nouns and particles
Of some of our forthcoming Articles.

The Quarterly—Ah, sir, if you
Had but the genius to review!—

TO DR. POLIDORI

A smart critique upon St. Helena,
Or if you only would but tell in a
Short compass what——but, to resume:
As I was saying, sir, the room—
The room 's so full of wits and bards,
Crabbes, Campbells, Crokers, Freres, and
Wards,
And others, neither bards nor wits:—
My humble tenement admits
All persons in the dress of gent,
From Mr. Hammond to Dog Dent.

A party dines with me to-day,
All clever men, who make their way:
Crabbe, Malcolm, Hamilton, and Chan-
trey,
Are all partakers of my pantry.
They 're at this moment in discussion
On poor De Staël's late dissolution.
Her book, they say, was in advance—
Pray Heaven, she tell the truth of France!
Thus run our time and tongues away;—
But, to return, sir, to your play:
Sorry, sir, but I cannot deal,
Unless 't were acted by O'Neill.
My hands so full, my head so busy,
I 'm almost dead, and always dizzy;
And so, with endless truth and hurry,
Dear Doctor, I am yours,

JOHN MURRAY.

The Coteries

FROM "BEPPO"

They cannot read, and so don't lisp in criticism;
Nor write, and so they don't affect the muse:
Were never caught in epigram or witticism,
Have no romances, sermons, plays, reviews,—
In harams learning soon would make a pretty schism!
But luckily these beauties are no "Blues",
No bustling Botherbys have they to show 'em
"That charming passage in the last new poem":

No solemn, antique gentleman of rhyme,
Who having angled all his life for fame,
And getting but a nibble at a time,
Still fussily keeps fishing on, the same

Small "Triton of the minnows", the sublime
Of mediocrity, the furious tame,
The echo's echo, usher of the school
Of female wits, boy bards—in short, a fool!

A stalking oracle of awful phrase,
The approving "*Good!*" (by no means GOOD in law),
Humming like flies around the newest blaze,
The bluest of bluebottles you e'er saw,
Teasing with blame, excruciating with praise,
Gorging the little fame he gets all raw,
Translating tongues he knows not even by letter,
And sweating plays so middling, bad were better.

One hates an author that's *all author*, fellows
In foolscap uniforms turn'd up with ink,
So very anxious, clever, fine, and jealous,
One don't know what to say to them, or think,

Unless to puff them with a pair of bellows;
Of coxcombry's worst coxcombs e'en the pink
Are preferable to these shreds of paper,
These unquench'd snuffings of the midnight taper.

Of these same we see several, and of others,
Men of the world, who know the world like men,
Scott, Rogers, Moore, and all the better brothers,
Who think of something else besides the pen;
But for the children of the "mighty mother's",
The would-be wits and can't-be gentlemen,
I leave them to their daily "tea is ready",
Smug coterie, and literary lady.

Dedication

TO "DON JUAN"

I

Bob Southey! You're a poet — Poet-laureate,
And representative of all the race;
Although 't is true that you turn'd out a Tory at
Last, — yours has lately been a common case;
And now, my Epic Renegade! what are ye at?
With all the Lakers, in and out of place?
A nest of tuneful persons, to my eye
Like "four and twenty Blackbirds in a pye;

II

"Which pye being open'd they began to sing"
(This old song and new simile holds good),

"A dainty dish to set before the King",
Or Regent, who admires such kind of food;—
And Coleridge, too, has lately taken wing,
But like a hawk encumber'd with his hood,—
Explaining metaphysics to the nation—
I wish he would explain his Explanation.

III

You, Bob! are rather insolent, you know,
At being disappointed in your wish
To supersede all warblers here below,
And be the only Blackbird in the dish;
And then you overstrain yourself, or so,
And tumble downward like the flying fish
Gasping on deck, because you soar too high, Bob,
And fall, for lack of moisture quite a-dry, Bob!

IV

And Wordsworth, in a rather long "Excursion"
(I think the quarto holds five hundred pages),
Has given a sample from the vasty version
Of his new system to perplex the sages;

'T is poetry—at least by his assertion,
And may appear so when the dog-star rages—
And he who understands it would be able
To add a story to the Tower of Babel.

V

You—Gentlemen! by dint of long seclusion
From better company, have kept your own
At Keswick, and, through still continued fusion
Of one another's minds, at last have grown
To deem as a most logical conclusion,
That Poesy has wreaths for you alone:
There is a narrowness in such a notion,
Which makes me wish you 'd change your lakes for ocean.

VI

I would not imitate the petty thought,
Nor coin my self-love to so base a vice,
For all the glory your conversion brought,
Since gold alone should not have been its price.

You have your salary; was 't for that you wrought?
And Wordsworth has his place in the Excise.
You 're shabby fellows—true—but poets still,
And duly seated on the immortal hill.

VII

Your bays may hide the baldness of your brows—
Perhaps some virtuous blushes;—let them go—
To you I envy neither fruit nor boughs—
And for the fame you would engross below,
The field is universal, and allows
Scope to all such as feel the inherent glow:
Scott, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, and Crabbe, will try
'Gainst you the question with posterity.

VIII

For me, who, wandering with pedestrian Muses,
Contend not with you on the winged steed,

I wish your fate may yield ye, when she chooses,
The fame you envy, and the skill you need;
And recollect a poet nothing loses
In giving to his brethren their full meed
Of merit, and complaint of present days
Is not the certain path to future praise.

IX

He that reserves his laurels for posterity
(Who does not often claim the bright reversion)
Has generally no great crop to spare it, he
Being only injured by his own assertion;
And although here and there some glorious rarity
Arise like Titan from the sea's immersion,
The major part of such appellants go
To—God knows where—for no one else can know.

X

If, fallen in evil days on evil tongues,
Milton appeal'd to the Avenger, Time,

If Time, the Avenger, execrates his wrongs,
And makes the word "Miltonic" mean "*sublime*",
He deign'd not to belie his soul in songs,
Nor turn his very talent to a crime;
He did not loathe the Sire to laud the Son,
But closed the tyrant-hater he begun.

XI

Think'st thou, could he—the blind Old Man—arise
Like Samuel from the grave, to freeze once more
The blood of monarchs with his prophecies,
Or be alive again—again all hoar
With time and trials, and those helpless eyes,
And heartless daughters—worn—and pale—and poor;
Would *he* adore a sultan? *he* obey
The intellectual eunuch Castlereagh?

XII

Cold-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant!
Dabbling its sleek young hands in Erin's gore,

And thus for wider carnage taught to pant,
Transferr'd to gorge upon a sister shore,
The vulgarest tool that Tyranny could want,
With just enough of talent, and no more,
To lengthen fetters by another fix'd,
And offer poison long already mix'd.

XIII

An orator of such set trash of phrase
Ineffably—legitimately vile,
That even its grossest flatterers dare not praise,
Nor foes—all nations—condescend to smile,—
Not even a sprightly blunder's spark can blaze
From that Ixion grindstone's ceaseless toil,
That turns and turns to give the world a notion
Of endless torments and perpetual motion.

XIV

A bungler even in its disgusting trade,
And botching, patching, leaving still behind

Something of which its masters are afraid,
States to be curb'd, and thoughts to be confined,
Conspiracy or Congress to be made—
Cobbling at manacles for all mankind—
A tinkering slave-maker, who mends old chains,
With God and man's abhorrence for its gains.

XV

If we may judge of matter by the mind,
Emasculated to the marrow *It*
Hath but two objects, how to serve, and bind,
Deeming the chain it wears even men may fit,
Eutropius of its many masters,—blind
To worth as freedom, wisdom as to wit,
Fearless—because *no* feeling dwells in ice,
Its very courage stagnates to a vice.

XVI

Where shall I turn me not to *view* its bonds,
For I will never *feel* them;—Italy!
Thy late reviving Roman soul desponds
Beneath the lie this State-thing breathed o'er thee—

Thy clanking chain, and Erin's yet green wounds,
Have voices—tongues to cry aloud for me.
Europe has slaves—allies—kings—armies still,
And Southey lives to sing them very ill.

XVII

Meantime—Sir Laureate—I proceed to dedicate,
In honest simple verse, this song to you.
And, if in flattering strains I do not predicate,
'T is that I still retain my "buff and blue";
My politics as yet are all to educate:
Apostasy's so fashionable, too,
To keep *one* creed's a task grown quite Herculean;
Is it not so, my Tory, ultra-Julian?

Character of a Learned Lady

FROM "DON JUAN"

His mother was a learned lady, famed
  For every branch of every science known—
In every Christian language ever named,
  With virtues equall'd by her wit alone:
She made the cleverest people quite ashamed,
  And even the good with inward envy groan,
Finding themselves so very much exceeded
In their own way by all the things that she did.

Her memory was a mine: she knew by heart
  All Calderon and greater part of Lopé,
So that if any actor miss'd his part
  She could have served him for the prompter's copy;

For her Feinagle's were an useless art,
And he himself obliged to shut up shop —he
Could never make a memory so fine as
That which adorn'd the brain of Donna Inez.

Her favourite science was the mathematical,
Her noblest virtue was her magnanimity,
Her wit (she sometimes tried at wit) was Attic all,
Her serious sayings darken'd to sublimity;
In short, in all things she was fairly what I call
A prodigy—her morning dress was dimity,
Her evening silk, or, in the summer, muslin,
And other stuffs, with which I won't stay puzzling.

She knew the Latin—that is, "the Lord's prayer",
And Greek—the alphabet—I'm nearly sure;

She read some French romances here and there,
Although her mode of speaking was not pure;
For native Spanish she had no great care,
At least her conversation was obscure;
Her thoughts were theorems, her words a problem,
As if she deem'd that mystery would ennoble 'em.

She liked the English and the Hebrew tongue,
And said there was analogy between 'em;
She proved it somehow out of sacred song,
But I must leave the proofs to those who 've seen 'em,
But this I heard her say, and can't be wrong,
And all may think which way their judgments lean 'em,
"'T is strange—the Hebrew noun which means 'I am',
The English always use to govern d—n".

Some women use their tongues—she *look'd* a lecture,
Each eye a sermon, and her brow a homily,

An all-in-all sufficient self-director,
Like the lamented late Sir Samuel Romilly,
The Law's expounder, and the State's corrector,
Whose suicide was almost an anomaly—
One sad example more, that "All is vanity",—
(The jury brought their verdict in "Insanity".)

In short, she was a walking calculation,
Miss Edgeworth's novels stepping from their covers,
Or Mrs. Trimmer's books on education,
Or "Cœleb's Wife" set out in quest of lovers,
Morality's prim personification,
In which not Envy's self a flaw discovers;
To others' share let "female errors fall",
For she had not even one—the worst of all.

Oh! she was perfect past all parallel—
Of any modern female saint's comparison;
So far above the cunning powers of hell,
Her guardian angel had given up his garrison;

Even her minutest motions went as
well
As those of the best time-piece made
by Harrison:
In virtues nothing earthly could surpass
her,
Save thine "incomparable oil", Macassar!
. . . . . .
Now Donna Inez had, with all her merit,
A great opinion of her own good
qualities;
Neglect, indeed, requires a saint to bear
it,
And such, indeed, she was in her
moralities;
But then she had a devil of a spirit,
And sometimes mix'd up fancies with
realities,
And let few opportunities escape
Of getting her liege lord into a scrape.

This was an easy matter with a man
Oft in the wrong, and never on his
guard;
And even the wisest, do the best they
can,
Have moments, hours, and days, so
unprepared,
That you might "brain them with their
lady's fan";

And sometimes ladies hit exceeding
hard,
And fans turn into falchions in fair hands,
And why and wherefore no one under-
stands.

'Tis pity learned virgins ever wed
With persons of no sort of education,
Or gentlemen, who, though well-born and
bred,
Grow tired of scientific conversation:
I don't choose to say much upon this
head,
I'm a plain man, and in a single
station,
But—Oh! ye lords of ladies intellectual,
Inform us truly, have they not hen-peck'd
you all?

Juan and Julia

FROM "DON JUAN"

It was upon a day, a summer's day; –
  Summer's indeed a very dangerous season,
And so is spring about the end of May;
  The sun, no doubt, is the prevailing reason;
But whatsoe'er the cause is, one may say,
  And stand convicted of more truth than treason,
That there are months which nature grows more merry in,—
March has its hares, and May must have its heroine.

'T was on a summer's day—the sixth of June:
  I like to be particular in dates,
Not only of the age, and year, but moon;
  They are a sort of post-house, where the Fates

Change horses, making history change
its tune,
Then spur away o'er empires and o'er
states,
Leaving at last not much besides chron-
ology,
Excepting the post-obits of theology.

'T was on the sixth of June, about the
hour
Of half-past six—perhaps still nearer
seven—
When Julia sate within as pretty a bower
As e'er held houri in that heathenish
heaven
Described by Mahomet, and Anacreon
Moore,
To whom the lyre and laurels have
been given,
With all the trophies of triumphant song—
He won them well, and may he wear
them long!

She sate, but not alone; I know not well
How this same interview had taken
place,
And even if I knew, I should not tell—
People should hold their tongues in any
case;

No matter how or why the thing befell,
But there were she and Juan, face to face—
When two such faces are so, 't would be wise,
But very difficult, to shut their eyes.
. . . . . .
The sun set, and up rose the yellow moon:
The devil 's in the moon for mischief; they
Who call'd her CHASTE, methinks, began too soon
Their nomenclature; there is not a day,
The longest, not the twenty-first of June,
Sees half the business in a wicked way,
On which three single hours of moonshine smile—
And then she looks so modest all the while!

There is a dangerous silence in that hour,
A stillness, which leaves room for the full soul
To open all itself, without the power
Of calling wholly back its self-control;
The silver light which, hallowing tree and tower,
Sheds beauty and deep softness o'er the whole,

Breathes also to the heart, and o'er it throws
A loving languor, which is not repose.
. . . . . .
Oh Plato! Plato! you have paved the way,
With your confounded fantasies, to more
Immoral conduct by the fancied sway
Your system feigns o'er the controlless core
Of human hearts, than all the long array
Of poets and romancers: - You're a bore,
A charlatan, a coxcomb—and have been,
At best, no better than a go-between.

And Julia's voice was lost, except in sighs,
Until too late for useful conversation;
The tears were gushing from her gentle eyes,
I wish, indeed, they had not had occasion;
But who, alas! can love, and then be wise?
Not that remorse did not oppose temptation;
A little still she strove, and much repented,
And whispering "I will ne'er consent" – consented.

Julia's Letter

FROM "DON JUAN"

"They tell me 'tis decided you depart:
'Tis wise—'tis well, but not the less a pain;
I have no further claim on your young heart,
Mine is the victim, and would be again:
To love too much has been the only art
I used;—I write in haste, and if a stain
Be on this sheet, 'tis not what it appears;
My eyeballs burn and throb, but have no tears.

"I loved, I love you, for this love have lost
State, station, heaven, mankind's, my own esteem,
And yet can not regret what it hath cost,
So dear is still the memory of that dream;

Yet, if I name my guilt, 't is not to boast,
None can deem harshlier of me than I deem:
I trace this scrawl because I cannot rest –
I've nothing to reproach, or to request.

"Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
'T is woman's whole existence; man may range
The court, camp, church, the vessel, and the mart;
Sword, gown, gain, glory, offer in exchange
Pride, fame, ambition, to fill up his heart,
And few there are whom these can not estrange;
Men have all these resources, we but one,
To love again, and be again undone.

'You will proceed in pleasure, and in pride,
Beloved and loving many; all is o'er
For me on earth, except some years to hide
My shame and sorrow deep in my heart's core:
These I could bear, but cannot cast aside
The passion which still rages as before, –

And so farewell—forgive me, love me—
No,
That word is idle now—but let it go.

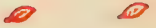
"My breast has been all weakness, is so
yet;
But still I think I can collect my mind;
My blood still rushes where my spirit's
set,
As roll the waves before the settled
wind;
My heart is feminine, nor can forget—
To all, except one image, madly blind;
So shakes the needle, and so stands the
pole,
As vibrates my fond heart to my fix'd
soul.

"I have no more to say, but linger still,
And dare not set my seal upon this sheet,
And yet I may as well the task fulfil,
My misery can scarce be more complete;
I had not lived till now, could sorrow
kill;
Death shuns the wretch who fain the
blow would meet,
And I must even survive this last adieu,
And bear with life, to love and pray for
you!"

JULIA'S LETTER

This note was written upon gilt-edged paper
With a neat little crow-quill, slight and new;
Her small white hand could hardly reach the taper,
It trembled as magnetic needles do,
And yet she did not let one tear escape her;
The seal a sun-flower; "*Elle vous suit partout*",
The motto cut upon a white cornelian;
The wax was superfine, its hue vermilion.

Poetical Commandments



FROM "DON JUAN"

My poem's epic, and is meant to be
  Divided in twelve books; each book containing,
With love, and war, a heavy gale at sea,
  A list of ships, and captains, and kings reigning,
New characters; the episodes are three:
  A panoramic view of hell's in training,
After the style of Virgil and of Homer,
So that my name of Epic's no misnomer.

All these things will be specified in time,
  With strict regard to Aristotle's rules,
The *Vade Mecum* of the true sublime,
  Which makes so many poets, and some fools:
Prose poets like blank-verse, I'm fond of rhyme,

Good workmen never quarrel with their tools;
I 've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery.

There 's only one slight difference between
Me and my epic brethren gone before,
And here the advantage is my own, I ween
(Not that I have not several merits more,
But this will more peculiarly be seen);
They so embellish, that 't is quite a bore
Their labyrinth of fables to thread through,
Whereas this story 's actually true.

If any person doubt it, I appeal
To history, tradition, and to facts,
To newspapers, whose truth all know and feel,
To plays in five, and operas in three acts;
All these confirm my statement a good deal,
But that which more completely faith exacts
Is, that myself, and several now in Seville,
Saw Juan's last elopement with the devil.

If ever I should condescend to prose,
I 'll write poetical commandments, which
Shall supersede beyond all doubt all those
That went before; in these I shall enrich
My text with many things that no one knows,
And carry precept to the highest pitch:
I 'll call the work "Longinus o'er a Bottle,
Or, Every Poet his *own* Aristotle".

Thou shalt believe in Milton, Dryden, Pope;
Thou shalt not set up Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey;
Because the first is crazed beyond all hope,
The second drunk, the third so quaint and mouthy:
With Crabbe it may be difficult to cope,
And Campbell's Hippocrene is somewhat drouthy:
Thou shalt not steal from Samuel Rogers, nor
Commit—flirtation with the muse of Moore.

Thou shalt not covet Mr. Sotheby's Muse,
His Pegasus, nor anything that 's his;

Thou shalt not bear false witness like
"the Blues"—
(There's one, at least, is very fond of
this);
Thou shalt not write, in short, but what
I choose:
This is true criticism, and you may
kiss—
Exactly as you please, or not—the rod;
But if you don't, I'll lay it on, by G- -d!

Youth and Fame

FROM "DON JUAN"

"*Non ego hoc ferrem calida juventâ*
Consule Planco," Horace said, and so
Say I; by which quotation there is meant a
Hint that some six or seven good years ago
(Long ere I dreamt of dating from the Brenta)
I was most ready to return a blow,
And would not brook at all this sort of thing
In my hot youth—when George the Third was king.

But now at thirty years my hair is gray—
(I wonder what it will be like at forty?
I thought of a peruke the other day) –
My heart is not much greener; and, in short, I
Have squander'd my whole summer while 'twas May,
And feel no more the spirit to retort; I

Have spent my life, both interest and
principal,
And deem not, what I deem'd, my soul
invincible.

No more—no more—Oh! never more on
me
The freshness of the heart can fall like
dew,
Which out of all the lovely things we
see
Extracts emotions beautiful and new,
Hived in our bosoms like the bag o' the
bee.
Think'st thou the honey with those
objects grew?
Alas! 'twas not in them, but in thy
power
To double even the sweetness of a flower.

No more—no more—Oh! never more, my
heart,
Canst thou be my sole world, my
universe!
Once all in all, but now a thing apart,
Thou canst not be my blessing or my
curse:
The illusion's gone for ever, and thou
art
Insensible, I trust, but none the worse,

And in thy stead I've got a deal of judgment,
Though heaven knows how it ever found a lodgment.

My days of love are over; me no more
The charms of maid, wife, and still less of widow,
Can make the fool of which they made before,—
In short, I must not lead the life I did do;
The credulous hope of mutual minds is o'er,
The copious use of claret is forbid too,
So for a good old-gentlemanly vice,
I think I must take up with avarice.

Ambition was my idol, which was broken
Before the shrines of Sorrow, and of Pleasure;
And the two last have left me many a token
O'er which reflection may be made at leisure:
Now, like Friar Bacon's brazen head, I've spoken,
"Time is, Time was, Time's past":—
a chymic treasure

Is glittering youth, which I have spent betimes—
My heart in passion, and my head on rhymes.

What is the end of Fame? 'tis but to fill
A certain portion of uncertain paper:
Some liken it to climbing up a hill,
Whose summit, like all hills, is lost in vapour;
For this men write, speak, preach, and heroes kill,
And bards burn what they call their "midnight taper".
To have, when the original is dust,
A name, a wretched picture, and worse bust.

What are the hopes of man? Old Egypt's King
Cheops erected the first pyramid
And largest, thinking it was just the thing
To keep his memory whole, and mummy hid;
But somebody or other rummaging
Burglariously broke his coffin's lid:
Let not a monument give you or me hopes,
Since not a pinch of dust remains of Cheops.

But I, being fond of true philosophy,
Say very often to myself, "Alas!
All things that have been born were born to die,
And flesh (which Death mows down to hay) is grass;
You 've pass'd your youth not so unpleasantly,
And if you had it o'er again—'t would pass—
So thank your stars that matters are no worse,
And read your Bible, sir, and mind your purse."

Fame and Time

FROM "DON JUAN"

Well—well; the world must turn upon its axis,
And all mankind turn with it, heads or tails,
And live and die, make love and pay our taxes,
And as the veering wind shifts, shift our sails;
The king commands us, and the doctor quacks us,
The priest instructs, and so our life exhales,
A little breath, love, wine, ambition, fame,
Fighting, devotion, dust, — perhaps a name.

. . . . . .

But words are things, and a small drop of ink,
Falling like dew, upon a thought, produces

That which makes thousands, perhaps
millions, think;
'T is strange, the shortest letter which
man uses
Instead of speech, may form a lasting
link
Of ages; to what straits old Time re-
duces
Frail man, when paper—even a rag like
this,
Survives himself, his tomb, and all that 's
his.

And when his bones are dust, his grave
a blank,
His station, generation, even his nation,
Become a thing, or nothing, save to rank
In chronological commemoration,
Some dull MS. oblivion long has sank,
Or graven stone found in a barrack's
station
In digging the foundation of a closet,
May turn his name up, as a rare deposit.

And glory long has made the sages
smile;
'T is something, nothing, words, illusion,
wind—
Depending more upon the historian's style

Than on the name a person leaves behind:
Troy owes to Homer what whist owes to Hoyle:
The present century was growing blind
To the great Marlborough's skill in giving knocks,
Until his late Life by Archdeacon Coxe.

Milton's the prince of poets—so we say;
A little heavy, but no less divine:
An independent being in his day—
Learn'd, pious, temperate in love and wine;
But his life falling into Johnson's way,
We're told this great high priest of all the Nine
Was whipt at college—a harsh sire—odd spouse,
For the first Mrs. Milton left his house.

All these are, *certes*, entertaining facts,
Like Shakspeare stealing deer, Lord Bacon's bribes;
Like Titus' youth, and Cæsar's earliest acts;
Like Burns (whom Doctor Currie well describes);

Like Cromwell's pranks; — but although truth exacts
These amiable descriptions from the scribes,
As most essential to their hero's story,
They do not much contribute to his glory.

All are not moralists, like Southey, when
He prated to the world of "Pantisocrasy";
Or Wordsworth unexcised, unhired, who then
Season'd his pedlar poems with democracy;
Or Coleridge, long before his flighty pen
Let to the *Morning Post* its aristocracy;
When he and Southey, following the same path,
Espoused two partners (milliners of Bath).

Such names at present cut a convict figure,
The very Botany Bay in moral geography;
Their loyal treason, renegado rigour,
Are good manure for their more bare biography;
Wordsworth's last quarto, by the way, is bigger
Than any since the birthday of typography;

A drowsy frowsy poem call'd the "Excursion";
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

He there builds up a formidable dyke
Between his own and others' intellect;
But Wordsworth's poem, and his followers, like
Johanna Southcote's Shiloh, and her sect,
Are things which in this century don't strike
The public mind,—so few are the elect;
And the new births of both their stale virginities
Have proved but dropsies, taken for divinities.

The Shipwreck

FROM "DON JUAN"

At one o'clock the wind with sudden
shift
Threw the ship right into the trough
of the sea,
Which struck her aft, and made an awk-
ward rift,
Started the stern-post, also shatter'd the
Whole of her stern frame, and, ere she
could lift
Herself from out her present jeopardy,
The rudder tore away: 't was time to
sound
The pumps, and there were four feet
water found.

One gang of people instantly was put
Upon the pumps, and the remainder set
To get up part of the cargo, and what
not;
But they could not come at the leak
as yet;

At last they did get at it really, but
Still their salvation was an even bet:
The water rush'd through in a way quite puzzling,
While they thrust sheets, shirts, jackets, bales of muslin,

Into the opening; but all such ingredients
Would have been vain, and they must have gone down,
Despite of all their efforts and expedients,
But for the pumps: I 'm glad to make them known
To all the brother tars who may have need hence,
For fifty tons of water were upthrown
By them per hour, and they had all been undone,
But for the maker, Mr. Mann, of London.

As day advanced the weather seem'd to abate,
And then the leak they reckon'd to reduce,
And keep the ship afloat, though three feet yet
Kept two hand and one chain-pump still in use.

The wind blew fresh again: as it grew late
A squall came on, and while some guns broke loose,
A gust—which all descriptive power transcends—
Laid with one blast the ship on her beam ends

There she lay, motionless, and seem'd upset;
The water left the hold, and wash'd the decks,
And made a scene men do not soon forget;
For they remember battles, fires, and wrecks,
Or any other thing that brings regret,
Or breaks their hopes, or hearts, or heads, or necks:
Thus drownings are much talk'd of by the divers,
And swimmers, who may chance to be survivors.

Immediately the masts were cut away,
Both main and mizen; first the mizen went,
The main-mast follow'd: but the ship still lay
Like a mere log, and baffled our intent.

Foremast and bowsprit were cut down, and they
Eased her at last (although we never meant
To part with all till every hope was blighted),
And then with violence the old ship righted.

It may be easily supposed, while this
Was going on, some people were unquiet,
That passengers would find it much amiss
To lose their lives, as well as spoil their diet;
That even the able seaman, deeming his
Days nearly o'er, might be disposed to riot,
As upon such occasions tars will ask
For grog, and sometimes drink rum from the cask.

There's nought, no doubt, so much the spirit calms
As rum and true religion: thus it was,
Some plunder'd, some drank spirits, some sung psalms,
The high wind made the treble, and as bass

The hoarse harsh waves kept time; fright cured the qualms
Of all the luckless landsmen's sea-sick maws:
Strange sounds of wailing, blasphemy, devotion,
Clamour'd in chorus to the roaring ocean.

Perhaps more mischief had been done, but for
Our Juan, who, with sense beyond his years,
Got to the spirit-room, and stood before
It with a pair of pistols; and their fears,
As if Death were more dreadful by his door
Of fire than water, spite of oaths and tears,
Kept still aloof the crew, who, ere they sunk,
Thought it would be becoming to die drunk.

"Give us more grog," they cried, "for it will be
All one an hour hence." Juan answer'd, "No!
'Tis true that death awaits both you and me,
But let us die like men, not sink below

Like brutes:"- and thus his dangerous
post kept he,
And none liked to anticipate the blow;
And even Pedrillo, his most reverend
tutor,
Was for some rum a disappointed suitor.

The good old gentleman was quite aghast,
And made a loud and pious lamentation;
Repented all his sins, and made a last
Irrevocable vow of reformation;
Nothing should tempt him more (this peril
past)
To quit his academic occupation,
In cloisters of the classic Salamanca,
To follow Juan's wake, like Sancho Panca.

But now there came a flash of hope once
more;
Day broke, and the wind lull'd: the
masts were gone,
The leak increased; shoals round her, but
no shore,
The vessel swam, yet still she held her
own.
They tried the pumps again, and though
before
Their desperate efforts seem'd all useless
grown,

A glimpse of sunshine set some hands to
bale—
The stronger pump'd, the weaker thrumm'd
a sail.

Under the vessel's keel the sail was pass'd
And for the moment it had some effect;
But with a leak, and not a stick of mast,
Nor rag of canvas, what could they
expect?
But still 't is best to struggle to the last,
'T is never too late to be wholly wreck'd:
And though 't is true that man can only die
once,
'T is not so pleasant in the Gulf of Lyons.

There winds and waves had hurl'd them,
and from thence,
Without their will, they carried them
away,
For they were forced with steering to
dispense,
And never had as yet a quiet day
On which they might repose, or even com-
mence
A jurymast or rudder, or could say
The ship would swim an hour, which, by
good luck,
Still swam—though not exactly like a
duck.

The wind, in fact, perhaps, was rather less,
But the ship labour'd so, they scarce could hope
To weather out much longer; the distress
Was also great with which they had to cope
For want of water, and their solid mess
Was scant enough: in vain the telescope
Was used—nor sail nor shore appear'd in sight,
Nought but the heavy sea, and coming night.

Again the weather threaten'd,—again blew
A gale, and in the fore and after hold
Water appear'd; yet, though the people knew
All this, the most were patient, and some bold,
Until the chains and leathers were worn through
Of all our pumps:—a wreck complete she roll'd,
At mercy of the waves, whose mercies are
Like human beings during civil war.

Then came the carpenter, at last, with tears
In his rough eyes, and told the captain, he

Could do no more: he was a man in years,
And long had voyaged through many a stormy sea,
And if he wept at length, they were not fears
That made his eyelids as a woman's be,
But he, poor fellow, had a wife and children,—
Two things for dying people quite bewildering.

The ship was evidently settling now
Fast by the head; and, all distinction gone,
Some went to prayers again, and made a vow
Of candles to their saints — but there were none
To pay them with; and some look'd o'er the bow;
Some hoisted out the boats; and there was one
That begg'd Pedrillo for an absolution,
Who told him to be damn'd—in his confusion.

Some lash'd them in their hammocks; some put on
Their best clothes, as if going to a fair;

Some cursed the day on which they saw
the sun,
And gnash'd their teeth, and, howling,
tore their hair;
And others went on as they had begun,
Getting the boats out, being well aware
That a tight boat will live in a rough sea,
Unless with breakers close beneath her lee.

The worst of all was, that in their con-
dition,
Having been several days in great distress,
'T was difficult to get out such provision
As now might render their long suffer-
ing less:
Men, even when dying, dislike inanition;
Their stock was damaged by the weather's
stress:
Two casks of biscuit, and a keg of butter,
Were all that could be thrown into the
cutter.

But in the long-boat they contrived to stow
Some pounds of bread, though injured
by the wet;
Water, a twenty-gallon cask or so;
Six flasks of wine; and they contrived
to get
A portion of their beef up from below,
And with a piece of pork, moreover, met,

But scarce enough to serve them for a
luncheon—
Then there was rum, eight gallons in a
puncheon.

The other boats, the yawl and pinnace, had
Been stove in the beginning of the gale;
And the long-boat's condition was but bad,
As there were but two blankets for a sail,
And one oar for a mast, which a young lad
Threw in by good luck over the ship's
rail;
And two boats could not hold, far less be
stored,
To save one half the people then on board.

'T was twilight, and the sunless day went
down
Over the waste of waters; like a veil,
Which, if withdrawn, would but disclose
the frown
Of one whose hate is mask'd but to
assail.
Thus to their hopeless eyes the night was
shown,
And grimly darkled o'er their faces pale,
And the dim desolate deep: twelve days
had Fear
Been their familiar, and now Death was
here.

Some trial had been making at a raft,
With little hope in such a rolling sea,
A sort of thing at which one would have laugh'd,
If any laughter at such times could be,
Unless with people who too much have quaff'd,
And have a kind of wild and horrid glee,
Half epileptical and half hysterical:—
Their preservation would have been a miracle.

At half-past eight o'clock, booms, hen-coops, spars,
And all things, for a chance, had been cast loose,
That still could keep afloat the struggling tars,
For yet they strove, although of no great use:
There was no light in heaven but a few stars,
The boats put off o'ercrowded with their crews;
She gave a heel, and then a lurch to port,
And, going down head foremost—sunk, in short.

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell—
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave,—
Then some leap'd overboard with dreadful yell,
As eager to anticipate their grave;
And the sea yawn'd around her like a hell,
And down she suck'd with her the whirling wave,
Like one who grapples with his enemy,
And strives to strangle him before he die.

And first one universal shriek there rush'd,
Louder than the loud ocean, like a crash
Of echoing thunder; and then all was hush'd,
Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows; but at intervals there gush'd,
Accompanied with a convulsive splash,
A solitary shriek, the bubbling cry
Of some strong swimmer in his agony.

Juan and Haidee

FROM "DON JUAN"

It was a wild and breaker-beaten coast,
With cliffs above, and a broad sandy shore,
Guarded by shoals and rocks as by an host,
With here and there a creek, whose aspect wore
A better welcome to the tempest-tost;
And rarely ceased the haughty billow's roar,
Save on the dead long summer days, which make
The outstretch'd ocean glitter like a lake.

And the small ripple spilt upon the beach
Scarcely o'erpass'd the cream of your champagne,
When o'er the brim the sparkling bumpers reach,
That spring-dew of the spirit! the heart's rain!

Few things surpass old wine; and they may preach
Who please,—the more because they preach in vain,—
Let us have wine and women, mirth and laughter,
Sermons and soda-water the day after.

Man, being reasonable, must get drunk;
The best of life is but intoxication:
Glory, the grape, love, gold, in these are sunk
The hopes of all men, and of every nation;
Without their sap, how branchless were the trunk
Of life's strange tree, so fruitful on occasion!
But to return,—Get very drunk; and when
You wake with headache, you shall see what then.

Ring for your valet—bid him quickly bring
Some hock and soda-water, then you'll know
A pleasure worthy Xerxes the great king;
For not the blest sherbet, sublimed with snow,
Nor the first sparkle of the desert-spring,
Nor Burgundy in all its sunset glow,

After long travel, ennui, love, or slaughter,
Vie with that draught of hock and soda-water.

The coast –I think it was the coast that I
Was just describing—Yes, it *was* the coast—
Lay at this period quiet as the sky,
The sands untumbled, the blue waves untost,
And all was stillness, save the sea-bird's cry,
And dolphin's leap, and little billow crost
By some low rock or shelve, that made it fret
Against the boundary it scarcely wet.

And forth they wander'd, her sire being gone,
As I have said, upon an expedition;
And mother, brother, guardian, she had none,
Save Zoe, who, although with due precision
She waited on her lady with the sun,
Thought daily service was her only mission,
Bringing warm water, wreathing her long tresses,
And asking now and then for cast-off dresses.

It was the cooling hour, just when the rounded
Red sun sinks down behind the azure hill,
Which then seems as if the whole earth it bounded,
Circling all nature, hush'd, and dim, and still,
With the far mountain-crescent half surrounded
On one side, and the deep sea calm and chill
Upon the other, and the rosy sky
With one star sparkling through it like an eye.

And thus they wander'd forth, and hand in hand,
Over the shining pebbles and the shells,
Glided along the smooth and harden'd sand,
And in the worn and wild receptacles
Work'd by the storms, yet work'd as it were plann'd,
In hollow halls, with sparry roofs and cells,
They turn'd to rest; and, each clasped by an arm,
Yielded to the deep twilight's purple charm.

They look'd up to the sky, whose floating glow
Spread like a rosy ocean, vast and bright;
They gazed upon the glittering sea below,
Whence the broad moon rose circling into sight;
They heard the waves' splash, and the wind so low,
And saw each other's dark eyes darting light
Into each other—and, beholding this,
Their lips drew near, and clung into a kiss;

A long, long kiss, a kiss of youth, and love,
And beauty, all concentrating like rays
Into one focus, kindled from above;
Such kisses as belong to early days,
Where heart, and soul, and sense, in concert move,
And the blood's lava, and the pulse a blaze,
Each kiss a heart-quake,—for a kiss's strength,
I think, it must be reckon'd by its length.

By length I mean duration; theirs endured
Heaven knows how long—no doubt they never reckon'd;

And if they had, they could not have secured
The sum of their sensations to a second:
They had not spoken; but they felt allured,
As if their souls and lips each other beckon'd,
Which, being join'd, like swarming bees they clung—
Their hearts the flowers from whence the honey sprung.

They were alone, but not alone as they
Who shut in chambers think it loneliness;
The silent ocean, and the starlight bay,
The twilight glow, which momently grew less,
The voiceless sands, and dropping caves, that lay
Around them, made them to each other press,
As if there were no life beneath the sky
Save theirs, and that their life could never die.

They fear'd no eyes nor ears on that lone beach;
They felt no terrors from the night; they were

All in all to each other: though their speech
Was broken words, they *thought* a language there,—
And all the burning tongues the passions teach
Found in one sigh the best interpreter
Of nature's oracle—first love,—that all
Which Eve has left her daughters since her fall.

. . . . . .

Alas, the love of women! it is known
To be a lovely and a fearful thing;
For all of theirs upon that die is thrown,
And if 'tis lost, life hath no more to bring
To them but mockeries of the past alone,
And their revenge is as the tiger's spring,
Deadly, and quick, and crushing; yet, as real
Torture is theirs—what they inflict they feel.

They are right; for man, to man so oft unjust,
Is always so to women; one sole bond
Awaits them, treachery is all their trust;
Taught to conceal, their bursting hearts despond
Over their idol, till some wealthier lust
Buys them in marriage—and what rests beyond?

A thankless husband, next a faithless lover,
Then dressing, nursing, praying, and all 's over.

Some take a lover, some take drams or prayers,
Some mind their household, others dissipation,
Some run away, and but exchange their cares,
Losing the advantage of a virtuous station;
Few changes e'er can better their affairs,
Theirs being an unnatural situation,
From the dull palace to the dirty hovel:
Some play the devil, and then write a novel.

Marriage and the Muse

FROM "DON JUAN"

There 's doubtless something in domestic doings
Which forms, in fact, true love's antithesis;
Romances paint at full length people's wooings,
But only give a bust of marriages;
For no one cares for matrimonial cooings,
There 's nothing wrong in a connubial kiss:
Think you, if Laura had been Petrarch's wife,
He would have written sonnets all his life?

All tragedies are finish'd by a death,
All comedies are ended by a marriage;
The future states of both are left to faith,
For authors fear description might disparage

The worlds to come of both, or fall beneath,
And then both worlds would punish their miscarriage;
So leaving each their priest and prayer-book ready,
They say no more of Death or of the Lady.

The only two that in my recollection
Have sung of heaven and hell, or marriage, are
Dante and Milton, and of both the affection
Was hapless in their nuptials, for some bar
Of fault or temper ruin'd the connection
(Such things, in fact, it don't ask much to mar);
But Dante's Beatrice and Milton's Eve
Were not drawn from their spouses, you conceive.

Some persons say that Dante meant theology
By Beatrice, and not a mistress—I,
Although my opinion may require apology,
Deem this a commentator's phantasy,

Unless indeed it was from his own knowledge he
Decided thus, and show'd good reason why;
I think that Dante's more abstruse ecstatics
Meant to personify the mathematics.

Troy

FROM "DON JUAN"

There, on the green and village-cotted hill, is
(Flank'd by the Hellespont, and by the sea)
Entomb'd the bravest of the brave, Achilles;
They say so—(Bryant says the contrary):
And farther downward, tall and towering still, is
The tumulus—of whom? Heaven knows; 't may be
Patroclus, Ajax, or Protesilaus;
All heroes, who if living still would slay us.

High barrows, without marble, or a name,
A vast, untill'd, and mountain-skirted plain,
And Ida in the distance, still the same,
And old Scamander (if 't is he), remain;

The situation seems still form'd for fame—
A hundred thousand men might fight again,
With ease; but where I sought for Ilion's walls,
The quiet sheep feeds, and the tortoise crawls;

Troops of untended horses; here and there
Some little hamlets, with new names uncouth;
Some shepherds (unlike Paris), led to stare
A moment at the European youth
Whom to the spot their school-boy feelings bear;
A Turk, with beads in hand and pipe in mouth,
Extremely taken with his own religion,
Are what I found there—but the devil a Phrygian.

Great Names

FROM "DON JUAN"

As boys love rows, my boyhood liked a
squabble;
But at this hour I wish to part in peace,
Leaving such to the literary rabble;
Whether my verse's fame be doom'd to
cease
While the right hand which wrote it still
is able,
Or of some centuries to take a lease
The grass upon my grave will grow as
long,
And sigh to midnight winds, but not to
song.

Of poets who come down to us through
distance
Of time and tongues, the foster-babes
of Fame,
Life seems the smallest portion of exis-
tence;
Where twenty ages gather o'er a name,

'T is as a snowball which derives assistance
From every flake, and yet rolls on the same,
Even till an iceberg it may chance to grow;
But, after all, 't is nothing but cold snow.

And so great names are nothing more than nominal,
And love of glory 's but an airy lust,
Too often in its fury overcoming all
Who would as 't were identify their dust
From out the wide destruction, which, entombing all,
Leaves nothing till "the coming of the just"—
Save change: I 've stood upon Achilles' tomb,
And heard Troy doubted; time will doubt of Rome.

The very generations of the dead
Are swept away, and tomb inherits tomb,
Until the memory of an age is fled,
And, buried, sinks beneath its offspring's doom:

Where are the epitaphs our fathers read?
Save a few gleaned from the sepulchral gloom
Which once-named myriads nameless lie beneath,
And lose their own in universal death.

I canter by the spot each afternoon
Where perish'd in his fame the hero-boy,
Who lived too long for men, but died too soon
For human vanity, the young De Foix!
A broken pillar, not uncouthly hewn,
But which neglect is hastening to destroy,
Records Ravenna's carnage on its face,
While weeds and ordure rankle round the base.

I pass each day where Dante's bones are laid:
A little cupola, more neat than solemn,
Protects his dust, but reverence here is paid
To the bard's tomb, and not the warrior's column:

The time must come, when both alike
decay'd,
The chieftain's trophy, and the poet's
volume,
Will sink where lie the songs and wars
of earth,
Before Pelides' death, or Homer's birth.

With human blood that column was
cemented,
With human filth that column is defiled,
As if the peasant's coarse contempt were
vented
To show his loathing of the spot he
soil'd:
Thus is the trophy used, and thus
lamented
Should ever be those blood-hounds, from
whose wild
Instinct of gore and glory earth has
known
Those sufferings Dante saw in hell alone.

Yet there will still be bards: though fame
is smoke,
Its fumes are frankincense to human
thought;
And the unquiet feelings, which first woke
Song in the world, will seek what then
they sought;

As on the beach the waves at last are broke,
Thus to their extreme verge the passions brought
Dash into poetry, which is but passion,
Or at least was so ere it grew a fashion.

If in the course of such a life as was
At once adventurous and contemplative,
Men who partake all passions as they pass,
Acquire the deep and bitter power to give
Their images again, as in a glass,
And in such colours that they seem to live;
You may do right forbidding them to show 'em,
But spoil (I think) a very pretty poem.

Change of Illusions

FROM "DON JUAN"

"You take things coolly, sir," said Juan.
"Why,"
Replied the other, "what can a man do?
There still are many rainbows in your sky,
But mine have vanish'd. All, when life is new,
Commence with feelings warm, and prospects high;
But time strips our illusions of their hue,
And one by one in turn, some grand mistake
Casts off its bright skin yearly like the snake.

"'Tis true, it gets another bright and fresh,
Or fresher, brighter; but the year gone through,

This skin must go the way, too, of all flesh,
Or sometimes only wear a week or two;—
Love's the first net which spreads its deadly mesh;
Ambition, Avarice, Vengeance, Glory, glue
The glittering lime-twigs of our latter days,
Where still we flutter on for pence or praise."

Life

FROM "DON JUAN"

O Love! O Glory! what are you who fly
Around us ever, rarely to alight?
There's not a meteor in the polar sky
Of such transcendent and more fleeting flight.
Chill, and chain'd to cold earth, we lift on high
Our eyes in search of either lovely light;
A thousand and a thousand colours they
Assume, then leave us on our freezing way.

And such as they are, such my present tale is,
A nondescript and ever-varying rhyme,
A versified Aurora Borealis,
Which flashes o'er a waste and icy clime.
When we know what all are, we must bewail us,
But ne'ertheless I hope it is no crime

To laugh at *all* things—for I wish to know
What, after *all*, are *all* things—but a *show*?

They accuse me—*Me*—the present writer of
The present poem — of — I know not what—
A tendency to under-rate and scoff
At human power and virtue, and all that;
And this they say in language rather rough.
Good God! I wonder what they would be at!
I say no more than hath been said in Danté's
Verse, and by Solomon and by Cervantes;

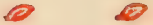
By Swift, by Machiavel, by Rochefoucault,
By Fénelon, by Luther, and by Plato;
By Tillotson, and Wesley, and Rousseau,
Who knew this life was not worth a potato.
'T is not their fault, nor mine, if this be so,—
For my part, I pretend not to be Cato,
Nor even Diogenes.—We live and die,
But which is best, you know no more than I.

LIFE

Socrates said, our only knowledge was
"To know that nothing could be known"; a pleasant
Science enough, which levels to an ass
Each man of wisdom, future, past, or present.
Newton (that proverb of the mind), alas!
Declared, with all his grand discoveries recent,
That he himself felt only "like a youth
Picking up shells by the great ocean—Truth".

Ecclesiastes said, "that all is vanity"—
Most modern preachers say the same, or show it
By their examples of true Christianity:
In short, all know, or very soon may know it;
And in this scene of all-confess'd inanity,
By saint, by sage, by preacher, and by poet,
Must I restrain me, through the fear of strife,
From holding up the nothingness of life?

The Glory of War



FROM "DON JUAN"

Oh, thou eternal Homer! I have now
To paint a siege, wherein more men were slain,
With deadlier engines and a speedier blow,
Than in thy Greek gazette of that campaign;
And yet, like all men else, I must allow,
To vie with thee would be about as vain
As for a brook to cope with ocean's flood;
But still we moderns equal you in blood;

If not in poetry, at least in fact;
And fact is truth, the grand desideratum!
Of which, howe'er the Muse describes each act,
There should be ne'ertheless a slight substratum.

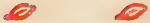
But now the town is going to be attack'd;
Great deeds are doing—how shall I relate 'em?
Souls of immortal generals! Phœbus watches
To colour up his rays from your despatches.

Oh, ye great bulletins of Bonaparte!
Oh, ye less grand long lists of kill'd and wounded!
Shade of Leonidas, who fought so hearty,
When my poor Greece was once, as now, surrounded!
Oh, Cæsar's Commentaries! now impart, ye
Shadows of glory! (lest I be confounded),
A portion of your fading twilight hues,
So beautiful, so fleeting, to the Muse.

When I call "fading" martial immortality,
I mean, that every age and every year,
And almost every day, in sad reality,
Some sucking hero is compell'd to rear,
Who, when we come to sum up the totality
Of deeds to human happiness most dear,

Turns out to be a butcher in great business,
Afflicting young folks with a sort of dizziness.

Medals, rank, ribands, lace, embroidery, scarlet,
Are things immortal to immortal man,
As purple to the Babylonian harlot:
An uniform to boys is like a fan
To women; there is scarce a crimson varlet
But deems himself the first in Glory's van.
But Glory's glory; and if you would find
What that is—ask the pig who sees the wind!

A Battle-field 

FROM "DON JUAN"

Oh, blood and thunder! and oh, blood and wounds!
These are but vulgar oaths, as you may deem,
Too gentle reader! and most shocking sounds:
And so they are; yet thus is Glory's dream
Unriddled, and as my true Muse expounds
At present such things, since they are her theme,
So be they her inspirers! Call them Mars,
Bellona, what you will—they mean but wars.

All was prepared—the fire, the sword, the men
To wield them in their terrible array.

The army, like a lion from his den,
March'd forth with nerves and sinews bent to slay,—
A human Hydra, issuing from its fen
To breathe destruction on its winding way,
Whose heads were heroes, which cut off in vain,
Immediately in others grew again.

History can only take things in the gross;
But could we know them in detail, perchance
In balancing the profit and the loss,
War's merit it by no means might enhance,
To waste so much gold for a little dross,
As hath been done, mere conquest to advance.
The drying up a single tear has more
Of honest fame, than shedding seas of gore.

And why?—because it brings self-approbation;
Whereas the other, after all its glare,
Shouts, bridges, arches, pensions from a nation,
Which (it may be) has not much left to spare,

A higher title, or a loftier station,
Though they may make Corruption gape or stare,
Yet, in the end, except in Freedom's battles,
Are nothing but a child of Murder's rattles.

And such they are—and such they will be found:
Not so Leonidas and Washington,
Whose every battle-field is holy ground,
Which breathes of nations saved, not worlds undone.
How sweetly on the ear such echoes sound!
While the mere victor's may appal or stun
The servile and the vain, such names will be
A watchword till the future shall be free.

The night was dark, and the thick mist allow'd
Nought to be seen save the artillery's flame,
Which arch'd the horizon like a fiery cloud,
And in the Danube's waters shone the same—

A mirror'd hell! the volleying roar, and loud
Long booming of each peal on peal, o'ercame
The ear far more than thunder; for Heaven's flashes
Spare, or smite rarely — man's make millions ashes!

The column order'd on the assault scarce pass'd
Beyond the Russian batteries a few toises,
When up the bristling Moslem rose at last,
Answering the Christian thunders with like voices:
Then one vast fire, air, earth, and stream embraced,
Which rock'd as 't were beneath the mighty noises;
While the whole rampart blazed like Etna, when
The restless Titan hiccups in his den;

And one enormous shout of "Aliah!" rose
In the same moment, loud as even the roar

Of war's most mortal engines, to their foes
Hurling defiance: city, stream, and shore
Resounded "Allah!" and the clouds which close
With thickening canopy the conflict o'er,
Vibrate to the Eternal Name. Hark! through
All sounds it pierceth, "Allah! Allah! Hu!"

The columns were in movement one and all,
But of the portion which attack'd by water,
Thicker than leaves the lives began to fall,
Though led by Arseniew, that great son of slaughter,
As brave as ever faced both bomb and ball.
"Carnage" (so Wordsworth tells you) "is God's daughter":
If *he* speak truth, she is Christ's sister, and
Just now behaved as in the Holy Land.

The Prince de Ligne was wounded in the knee;
Count Chapeau-Bras, too, had a ball between

His cap and head, which proves the head to be
Aristocratic as was ever seen,
Because it then received no injury
More than the cap; in fact, the ball could mean
No harm unto a right legitimate head;
"Ashes to ashes"—why not lead to lead?

Also the General Markow, Brigadier,
Insisting on removal of *the prince*
Amidst some groaning thousands dying near,—
All common fellows, who might writhe and wince,
And shriek for water into a deaf ear,—
The General Markow, who could thus evince
His sympathy for rank, by the same token,
To teach him greater, had his own leg broken.

Three hundred cannon threw up their emetic,
And thirty thousand muskets flung their pills,
Like hail, to make a bloody diuretic.
Mortality! thou hast thy monthly bills:

Thy plagues, thy famines, thy physicians, yet tick,
Like the death-watch, within our ears the ills
Past, present, and to come;—but all may yield
To the true portrait of one battle-field;

There the still-varying pangs, which multiply
Until their very number makes men hard
By the infinities of agony,
Which meet the gaze, whate'er it may regard—
The groan, the roll in dust, the all-white eye
Turn'd back within its socket,—these reward
Your rank and file by thousands, while the rest
May win perhaps a riband at the breast!

Yet I love glory;—glory 's a great thing:—
Think what it is to be in your old age
Maintain'd at the expense of your good king:
A moderate pension shakes full many a sage,

And heroes are but made for bards to sing,
Which is still better; thus in verse to wage
Your wars eternally, besides enjoying
Half-pay for life, make mankind worth destroying.

Wellington

FROM "DON JUAN"

Oh, Wellington! (or "Villainton"—for Fame
Sounds the heroic syllables both ways;
France could not even conquer your great name,
But punn'd it down to this facetious phrase—
Beating or beaten she will laugh the same)
You have obtain'd great pensions and much praise:
Glory like yours should any dare gainsay,
Humanity would rise, and thunder "Nay!"

I don't think that you used Kinnaird quite well
In Marinèt's affair — in fact, 't was shabby,
And like some other things won't do to tell
Upon your tomb in Westminster's old abbey.

Upon the rest 't is not worth while to dwell,
Such tales being for the tea-hours of some tabby;
But though your years as *man* tend fast to zero,
In fact your grace is still but a *young hero.*

Though Britain owes (and pays you too) so much,
Yet Europe doubtless owes you greatly more:
You have repair'd Legitimacy's crutch,
A prop not quite so certain as before:
The Spanish, and the French, as well as Dutch,
Have seen, and felt, how strongly you *restore*;
And Waterloo has made the world your debtor
(I wish your bards would sing it rather better).

You are "the best of cut-throats":—do not start;
The phrase is Shakspeare's, and not misapplied:—
War 's a brain-spattering, windpipe-slitting art,
Unless her cause by right be sanctified.

If you have acted *once* a generous part,
The world, not the world's masters, will decide,
And I shall be delighted to learn who,
Save you and yours, have gain'd by Waterloo?

I am no flatterer—you've supp'd full of flattery:
They say you like it too—'t is no great wonder.
He whose whole life has been assault and battery,
At last may get a little tired of thunder;
And swallowing eulogy much more than satire, he
May like being praised for every lucky blunder,
Call'd "Saviour of the Nations" not yet saved,
And "Europe's Liberator"—still enslaved.

I've done. Now go and dine from off the plate
Presented by the Prince of the Brazils,
And send the sentinel before your gate
A slice or two from your luxurious meals:

He fought, but has not fed so well of late.
Some hunger, too, they say the people feels:—
There is no doubt that you deserve your ration,
But pray give back a little to the nation.

I don't mean to reflect—a man so great as
You, my lord duke! is far above reflection:
The high Roman fashion, too, of Cincinnatus,
With modern history has but small connection:
Though as an Irishman you love potatoes,
You need not take them under your direction;
And half a million for your Sabine farm
Is rather dear!—I 'm sure I mean no harm.

Great men have always scorn'd great recompenses:
Epaminondas saved his Thebes, and died,
Not leaving even his funeral expenses:
George Washington had thanks, and nought beside,

Except the all-cloudless glory (which few men's is)
To free his country: Pitt too had his pride,
And as a high-soul'd minister of state is
Renown'd for ruining Great Britain gratis.

Never had mortal man such opportunity,
Except Napoleon, or abused it more:
You might have freed fallen Europe from the unity
Of tyrants, and been blest from shore to shore:
And *now*—what *is* your fame? Shall the Muse tune it ye?
Now—that the rabble's first vain shouts are o'er?
Go! hear it in your famish'd country's cries!
Behold the world! and curse your victories!

As these new cantos touch on warlike feats,
To *you* the unflattering Muse deigns to inscribe
Truths, that you will not read in the Gazettes,
But which 't is time to teach the hireling tribe

Who fatten on their country's gore, and debts,
Must be recited—and without a bribe.
You *did great* things: but not being *great* in mind,
Have left *undone the greatest*—and mankind.

Don Juan at St. Petersburg

FROM "DON JUAN"

But I am apt to grow too metaphysical:
"The time is out of joint",—and so am I;
I quite forget this poem 's merely quizzical,
And deviate into matters rather dry.
I ne'er decide what I shall say, and this I call
Much too poetical: men should know why
They write, and for what end; but, note or text,
I never know the word which will come next.

So on I ramble, now and then narrating,
Now pondering:—it is time we should narrate.
I left Don Juan with his horses baiting—
Now we 'll get o'er the ground at a great rate.

I shall not be particular in stating
His journey, we've so many tours of late:
Suppose him then at Petersburg; suppose
That pleasant capital of painted snows;

Suppose him in a handsome uniform;
A scarlet coat, black facings, a long plume,
Waving, like sails new shiver'd in a storm,
Over a cock'd hat in a crowded room,
And brilliant breeches, bright as a Cairn Gorme,
Of yellow casimire we may presume,
White stockings drawn uncurdled as new milk
O'er limbs whose symmetry set off the silk;

Suppose him sword by side, and hat in hand,
Made up by youth, fame, and an army tailor—
That great enchanter, at whose rod's command
Beauty springs forth, and Nature's self turns paler,

Seeing how Art can make her work more
grand
(When she don't pin men's limbs in
like a gaoler),—
Behold him placed as if upon a pillar!
He
Seems Love turn'd a lieutenant of artil-
lery!

His bandage slipp'd down into a cravat;
His wings subdued to epaulettes; his
quiver
Shrunk to a scabbard, with his arrows at
His side as a small sword, but sharp
as ever;
His bow converted into a cock'd hat;
But still so like, that Psyche were more
clever
Than some wives (who make blunders no
less stupid),
If she had not mistaken him for Cupid.

Newton and Poets

FROM "DON JUAN"

When Newton saw an apple fall, he found
In that slight startle from his contemplation—
'T is *said* (for I 'll not answer above ground
For any sage's creed or calculation)—
A mode of proving that the earth turn'd round
In a most natural whirl, call'd "gravitation";
And this is the sole mortal who could grapple,
Since Adam, with a fall, or with an apple.

Man fell with apples, and with apples rose,
If this be true; for we must deem the mode
In which Sir Isaac Newton could disclose
Through the then unpaved stars the turnpike road,

A thing to counterbalance human woes:
For ever since immortal man hath glow'd
With all kinds of mechanics, and full soon
Steam-engines will conduct him to the moon.

And wherefore this exordium?—Why, just now,
In taking up this paltry sheet of paper,
My bosom underwent a glorious glow,
And my internal spirit cut a caper:
And though so much inferior, as I know,
To those who, by the dint of glass and vapour,
Discover stars, and sail in the wind's eye,
I wish to do as much by poesy.

In the wind's eye I have sail'd, and sail; but for
The stars, I own my telescope is dim;
But at the least I have shunn'd the common shore,
And leaving land far out of sight, would skim
The ocean of eternity: the roar
Of breakers has not daunted my slight, trim,
But *still* sea-worthy skiff; and she may float
Where ships have founder'd, as doth many a boat.

London

FROM "DON JUAN"

The sun went down, the smoke rose up, as from
A half-unquench'd volcano, o'er a space
Which well beseem'd the "Devil's drawing-room",
As some have qualified that wondrous place:
But Juan felt, though not approaching *home*,
As one who, though he were not of the race,
Revered the soil, of those true sons the mother,
Who butcher'd half the earth, and bullied t' other.

A mighty mass of brick, and smoke, and shipping,
Dirty and dusky, but as wide as eye
Could reach, with here and there a sail just skipping
In sight, then lost amidst the forestry

Of masts; a wilderness of steeples peeping
On tiptoe through their seal-coal canopy;
A huge, dun cupola, like a foolscap crown
On a fool's head—and there is London Town!

But Juan saw not this: each wreath of smoke
Appear'd to him as but the magic vapour
Of some alchymic furnace, from whence broke
The wealth of worlds (a wealth of tax and paper):
The gloomy clouds, which o'er it as a yoke
Are bow'd, and put the sun out like a taper,
Were nothing but the natural atmosphere,
Extremely wholesome, though but rarely clear.

He paused—and so will I; as doth a crew
Before they give their broadside. By and by,
My gentle countrymen, we will renew
Our old acquaintance; and at least I 'll try

To tell you truths *you* will not take as true,
Because they are so;—a male Mrs. Fry,
With a soft besom will I sweep your halls,
And brush a web or two from off the walls.

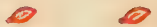
Oh, Mrs. Fry! Why go to Newgate? Why
Preach to poor rogues? And wherefore not begin
With Carlton, or with other houses? Try
Your hand at harden'd and imperial sin.
To mend the people's an absurdity,
A jargon, a mere philanthropic din,
Unless you make their betters better:—Fy!
I thought you had more religion, Mrs. Fry.

Teach them the decencies of good three-score,
Cure them of tours, hussar and highland dresses;
Tell them that youth once gone returns no more,
That hired huzzas redeem no land's distresses;

Tell them Sir William Curtis is a bore,
Too dull even for the dullest of excesses,
The witless Falstaff of a hoary Hal,
A fool whose bells have ceased to ring at all.

Tell them, though it may be perhaps too late
On life's worn confine, jaded, bloated, sated,
To set up vain pretences of being great,
'T is not so to be good; and be it stated,
The worthiest kings have ever loved least state:
And tell them—But you won't, and I have prated
Just now enough; but by and by I 'll prattle
Like Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' battle.

Poets of the Age



FROM "DON JUAN"

In twice five years the "greatest living poet",
Like to the champion in the fisty ring,
Is call'd on to support his claim, or show it,
Although 't is an imaginary thing.
Even I—albeit I 'm sure I did not know it,
Nor sought of foolscap subjects to be king,—
Was reckon'd, a considerable time,
The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme.

But Juan was my Moscow, and Faliero
My Leipsic, and my Mont Saint Jean seems Cain:
"La Belle Alliance" of dunces down at zero,
Now that the Lion 's fall'n, may rise again:

But I will fall at least as fell my hero;
Nor reign at all, or as a *monarch* reign;
Or to some lonely isle of gaolers go,
With turncoat Southey for my turnkey Lowe.

Sir Walter reign'd before me; Moore and Campbell
Before and after; but now grown more holy,
The Muses upon Sion's hill must ramble
With poets almost clergymen, or wholly;
And Pegasus has a psalmodic amble
Beneath the very Reverend Rowley Powley,
Who shoes the glorious animal with stilts,
A modern Ancient Pistol—by the hilts!

Still he excels that artificial hard
Labourer in the same vineyard, though the vine
Yields him but vinegar for his reward,—
That neutralized dull Dorus of the Nine;
That swarthy Sporus, neither man nor bard;
That ox of verse, who *ploughs* for every line:—
Cambyses' roaring Romans beat at least
The howling Hebrews of Cybele's priest.—

Then there 's my gentle Euphues; who, they say,
Sets up for being a sort of *moral me*;
He 'll find it rather difficult some day
To turn out both, or either, it may be.
Some persons think that Coleridge hath the sway;
And Wordsworth hath supporters, two or three;
And that deep-mouth'd Bœotian, "Savage Landor",
Has taken for a swan rogue Southey's gander.

John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,
Just as he really promis'd something great,
If not intelligible, without Greek
Contrived to talk about the gods of late,
Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
Poor fellow! His was an untoward fate;
'T is strange the mind, that very fiery particle,
Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.

The list grows long of live and dead pretenders
To that which none will gain—or none will know
The conqueror at least; who, ere Time renders
His last award, will have the long grass grow
Above his burnt-out brain, and sapless cinders.
If I might augur, I should rate but low
Their chances;—they are too numerous, like the thirty
Mock tyrants, when Rome's annals wax'd but dirty.

This is the literary *lower* empire,
Where the prætorian bands take up the matter;—
A "dreadful trade", like his who "gathers samphire",
The insolent soldiery to soothe and flatter,
With the same feelings as you 'd coax a vampire.
Now, were I once at home, and in good satire,
I 'd try conclusions with those Janizaries,
And show them *what* an intellectual war is.

I think I know a trick or two, would turn
Their flanks;—but it is hardly worth my while,
With such small gear to give myself concern:
Indeed I 've not the necessary bile;
My natural temper 's really aught but stern,
And even my Muse's worst reproof 's a smile;
And then she drops a brief and modern curtsy,
And glides away, assured she never hurts ye.

Carpe Diem

FROM "DON JUAN"

"Where is the world?" cries Young, at *eighty*—"Where
The world in which a man was born?" Alas!
Where is the world of *eight* years past? *'T'was there*—
I look for it—'tis gone, a globe of glass!
Crack'd, shiver'd, vanish'd, scarcely gazed on, ere
A silent change dissolves the glittering mass.
Statesmen, chiefs, orators, queens, patriots, kings,
And dandies, all are gone on the wind's wings.

Where is Napoleon the Grand? God knows:
Where little Castlereagh? The devil can tell:

Where Grattan, Curran, Sheridan, all those
Who bound the bar or senate in their spell?
Where is the unhappy Queen, with all her woes?
And where the Daughter, whom the Isles loved well?
Where are those martyr'd saints the Five per Cents?
And where—oh, where the devil are the Rents?

Where's Brummel? Dish'd. Where's Long Pole Wellesley? Diddled.
Where's Whitbread? Romilly? Where's George the Third?
Where is his will? (That's not so soon unriddled.)
And where is "Fum" the Fourth, our "royal bird"?
Gone down, it seems, to Scotland, to be fiddled
Unto by Sawney's violin, we have heard:
"Caw me, caw thee"—for six months hath been hatching
This scene of royal itch and royal scratching.

Where is Lord This? And where my Lady That?
The Honourable Mistresses and Misses?
Some laid aside like an old Opera hat,
Married, unmarried, and remarried: (this is
An evolution oft performed of late).
Where are the Dublin shouts — and London hisses?
Where are the Grenvilles? Turn'd, as usual. Where
My friends the Whigs? Exactly where they were.

Where are the Lady Carolines and Franceses?
Divorced or doing thereanent. Ye annals
So brilliant, where the lists of routs and dances is,—
Thou *Morning Post*, sole record of the panels
Broken in carriages, and all the phantasies
Of fashion,—say what streams now fill those channels?
Some die, some fly, some languish on the Continent,
Because the times have hardly left them *one* tenant.

Some who once set their caps at cautious dukes,
Have taken up at length with younger brothers:
Some heiresses have bit at sharpers' hooks:
Some maids have been made wives, some merely mothers:
Others have lost their fresh and fairy looks:
In short, the list of alterations bothers.
There's little strange in this, but something strange is
The unusual quickness of these common changes.

Talk not of seventy years as age; in seven
I have seen more changes, down from monarchs to
The humblest individual under heaven,
Than might suffice a moderate century through.
I knew that nought was lasting, but now even
Change grows too changeable, without being new:
Nought's permanent among the human race,
Except the Whigs *not* getting into place.

I have seen Napoleon, who seem'd quite
a Jupiter,
Shrink to a Saturn. I have seen a Duke
(No matter which) turn politician stupider,
If that can well be, than his wooden
look.
But it is time that I should hoist my
"Blue Peter",
And sail for a new theme:—I have seen
—and shook
To see it—the king hiss'd, and then
carest;
But don't pretend to settle which was best.

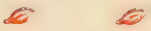
I have seen the Landholders without a
rap—
I have seen Joanna Southcote—I have
seen
The House of Commons turn'd to a tax-
trap—
I have seen that sad affair of the late
Queen—
I have seen crowns worn instead of a
fool's cap,
I have seen a Congress doing all that's
mean—
I have seen some nations, like o'erloaded
asses,
Kick off their burthens—meaning the
high classes.

CARPE DIEM

I have seen small poets, and great prosers, and
Interminable—*not eternal*—speakers—
I have seen the funds at war with house and land—
I have seen the country gentlemen turn squeakers—
I have seen the people ridden o'er like sand
By slaves on horseback—I have seen malt liquors
Exchanged for "thin potations" by John Bull—
I have seen John half detect himself a fool.—

But "carpe diem", Juan, "carpe, carpe"!
To-morrow sees another race as gay
And transient, and devour'd by the same harpy.
"Life's a poor player",—then "play out the play,
Ye villains!" and above all keep a sharp eye
Much less on what you do than what you say:
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you *seem*, but always what you *see*.

The Age of Indifference



FROM "DON JUAN"

I'll not gainsay them; it is not my cue;
I'll leave them to their taste, no doubt the best:
An eye's an eye, and whether black or blue,
Is no great matter, so 't is in request;
'T is nonsense to dispute about a hue—
The kindest may be taken as a test.
The fair sex should be always fair; and no man,
Till thirty, should perceive there 's a plain woman.

And after that serene and somewhat dull
Epoch, that awkward corner turn'd for days
More quiet, when our moon 's no more at full,
We may presume to criticise or praise;

Because indifference begins to lull
Our passions, and we walk in wisdom's ways;
Also because the figure and the face
Hint, that 'tis time to give the younger place.

I know that some would fain postpone this era,
Reluctant as all placemen to resign
Their post; but theirs is merely a chimera,
For they have pass'd life's equinoctial line:
But then they have their claret and Madeira,
To irrigate the dryness of decline;
And county meetings, and the parliament,
And debt, and what not, for their solace sent.

And is there not religion, and reform,
Peace, war, the taxes, and what 's call'd the "Nation"?
The struggle to be pilots in a storm?
The landed and the money'd speculation?
The joys of mutual hate to keep them warm,
Instead of love, that mere hallucination?

Now hatred is by far the longest pleasure;
Men love in haste, but they detest at leisure.

Rough Johnson, the great moralist, profess'd,
Right honestly, "he liked an honest hater!"—
The only truth that yet has been confest
Within these latest thousand years or later.
Perhaps the fine old fellow spoke in jest:—
For my part, I am but a mere spectator,
And gaze where'er the palace or the hovel is,
Much in the mood of Goethe's Mephistopheles;

But neither love nor hate in much excess;
Though 't was not once so. If I sneer sometimes,
It is because I cannot well do less,
And now and then it also suits my rhymes.
I should be very willing to redress
Men's wrongs, and rather check than punish crimes,

Had not Cervantes, in that too true tale
Of Quixote, shown how all such efforts fail.

Of all tales 'tis the saddest—and more sad,
Because it makes us smile: his hero 's right,
And still pursues the right;—to curb the bad
His only object, and 'gainst odds to fight.
His guerdon: 'tis his virtue makes him mad!
But his adventures form a sorry sight;—
A sorrier still is the great moral taught,
By that real epic unto all who have thought.

Redressing injury, revenging wrong,
To aid the damsel and destroy the caitiff;
Opposing singly the united strong,
From foreign yoke to free the helpless native:—
Alas! must noblest views, like an old song,
Be for mere fancy's sport a theme creative,

A jest, a riddle, Fame through thin and
thick sought!
And Socrates himself but Wisdom's Quix-
ote?

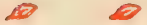
Cervantes smiled Spain's chivalry away;
A single laugh demolish'd the right
arm
Of his own country;—seldom since that
day
Has Spain had heroes. While Ro-
mance could charm,
The world gave ground before her bright
array;
And therefore have his volumes done
such harm,
That all their glory, as a composition,
Was dearly purchased by his land's per-
dition.

On My Thirty-third Birthday

January 22, 1821

Through life's dull road, so dim and dirty,
I have dragg'd to three-and-thirty.
What have these years left to me?
Nothing—except thirty-three.

On this Day I Complete my Thirty-sixth year



MISSOLONGHI,
Jan. 22, 1824.

'T is time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it hath ceased to move:
Yet, though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love!

My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone!

The fire that on my bosom preys
Is lone as some volcanic isle;
No torch is kindled at its blaze—
A funeral pile.

The hope, the fear, the jealous care,
The exalted portion of the pain
And power of love, I cannot share,
But wear the chain.

But 'tis not THUS—and 'tis not HERE—
  Such thoughts should shake my soul, nor NOW,
Where glory decks the hero's bier,
    Or binds his brow.

The sword, the banner, and the field,
  Glory and Greece, around me see!
The Spartan, borne upon his shield,
    Was not more free.

Awake! (not Greece—she *is* awake!)
  Awake my spirit! Think through WHOM
Thy life-blood tracks its parent lake,
    And then strike home!

Tread those reviving passions down,
  Unworthy manhood!—unto thee
Indifferent should the smile or frown
    Of beauty be.

If thou regret'st thy youth, WHY LIVE?
  The land of honourable death
Is here:—up to the field, and give
    Away thy breath!

Seek out—less often sought than found—
  A soldier's grave, for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
    And take thy rest.

Note

As I have frequently omitted and sometimes transposed stanzas in my quotations from Byron's longer poems, I give here the exact reference to every passage in which any alteration has been made. Where no reference is given, the poem has been printed exactly as it stands in Byron's works.

69. *Napoleon.* "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 90–92; canto iii, stanzas 36, 42, 43.

73. *Waterloo.* "Childe Harold", canto iii, stanzas 17, 21–30.

83. *Greece.* "The Giaour", lines 103–141.

101. *The Coliseum.* "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 139–141.

103. *The Dogs' Carnival.* "The Siege of Corinth", stanza 16, lines 17–55.

106. *Mazeppa's Ride.* "Mazeppa", stanza 13, lines 1–40; stanza 17, lines 1–56; stanza 18.

111. *The Falls of Terni.* "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 69–72.

114. *An August Evening on the Brenta.* "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 27–29.

116. *Venice.* "Childe Harold," canto iv, stanzas 1–3, 11, 15, 18.

120. *Rome.* "Childe Harold", canto iv, stanzas 78 81; canto iii, stanzas 107–110.

125. *Nature and Solitude.* "Childe Harold", canto ii, stanzas 25, 26; canto iii, stanzas 72–74, 96, 97.

133. *Stanzas.* Lines 1–30.

149. *Italy and England.* "Beppo", stanzas 41–52.

158. *The Coteries.* "Beppo", stanzas 72–76.

170. *Character of a Learned Lady.* "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 10–16, 20–22.

176. *Juan and Julia.* "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 102–105, 113, 114, 116, 117.

180. *Julia's Letter.* "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 192–198.

184. *Poetical Commandments.* "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 200–206.

188. *Youth and Fame.* "Don Juan", canto i, stanzas 212–220.

193. *Fame and Time.* "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 4, 88–95.

198. *The Shipwreck.* "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 27–53.

211. *Juan and Haidee.* "Don Juan", canto ii, stanzas 177–189, 199–201.

219. *Marriage and the Muse.* "Don Juan", canto iii, stanzas 8–11.

222. *Troy.* "Don Juan", canto iv, stanzas 76–78.

224. *Great Names.* "Don Juan", canto iv, stanzas 99–107.

229. *Change of Illusions.* "Don Juan", canto v, stanzas 21, 22.

231. *Life.* "Don Juan", canto vii, stanzas 1–6.

234. *The Glory of War.* "Don Juan", canto vii, stanzas 80–84.

237. *A Battle-field.* "Don Juan", canto viii, stanzas 6–14.

245. *Wellington.* "Don Juan", canto ix, stanzas 1–10.

251. *Don Juan at St. Petersburg.* "Don Juan", canto ix, stanzas 41–45.

254. *Newton and Poets* "Don Juan", canto x, stanzas 1–4.

256. *London.* "Don Juan", canto x, stanzas 81–87.

260. *Poets of the Age.* "Don Juan", canto xi, stanzas 55–63.

265. *Carpe Diem.* "Don Juan", canto xi, stanzas 76–86.

271. *The Age of Indifference.* "Don Juan" canto xiii, stanzas 3–11.

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